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Audit of the University of Eastern Finland 2017

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Abstract

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Audit of the University of Eastern Finland 2017

Authors

Timo Aarrevaara, Eva Werner, Gabriele Althoff, Juha Isotalo, Christopher Stephens, Marja-Liisa Saarilampi and Kati Isoaho

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre has conducted an audit of the University of Eastern Finland and has awarded the University a quality label that is valid for six years from 21 April 2017. The quality management system of the University of Eastern Finland fulfils the national criteria set for the quality management of higher education institutions, and corresponds to the European quality assurance principles and recommendations for higher education institutions.

The object of the audit was the quality management system that the University has developed based on its own needs and goals. The freely selected audit target chosen by the University was “International academic affairs, arriving and leaving exchange students”.

The following were regarded as key strengths of the quality management system:

- The open quality culture at the University of Eastern Finland is supported by a committed and systematically operating quality team.
- The Main Quality Manual as the backbone of the system is clear and comprehensive and accessible to the different users.
- Systematic internal audits and benchmarking provide information on the phases of quality work and bring more structure to quality-related activities.

Among others, the following recommendations were given to the University of Eastern Finland:

- The audit team advises the University of Eastern Finland to engage more systematically with stakeholders in defining their role in university's quality work. The audit team recommends, that a set of qualitative indicators should be considered to boost regional and international impact.
- The leaders of the institution should develop a clear and overall institutional interpretation of strategic key concepts, such as student-centredness and internationalisation and communicate it to all stakeholders. The audit team encourages the University to provide more training opportunities for the personnel to support the common interpretation of strategic key concepts.
- The large number of additional local quality manuals should be reconsidered to make operational quality work as straight forward, consistent and understandable as possible.

Keywords

Audit, evaluation, higher education institutions, quality, quality management, quality system, university

Tiivistelmä

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Timo Aarrevaara, Eva Werner, Gabriele Althoff, Juha Isotalo, Christopher Stephens, Marja-Liisa Saarilampi ja Kati Isoaho

Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus on toteuttanut Itä-Suomen yliopiston auditoinnin ja antanut korkeakoululle laatuleiman, joka on voimassa kuusi vuotta 21.4.2017 alkaen. Itä-Suomen yliopiston laatujärjestelmä täyttää korkeakoulujen laadunhallinnalle asetetut kansalliset kriteerit ja vastaa eurooppalaisia korkeakoulujen laadunhallinnan periaatteita ja suosituksia.

Auditoinnin kohteena oli Itä-Suomen yliopiston laatujärjestelmä, jonka korkeakoulu on kehittänyt omista lähtökohdistaan ja tavoitteidensa mukaisesti. Korkeakoulun valitsema vapaavalintainen auditointikohde oli "International academic affairs, arriving and leaving exchange students".

Laatujärjestelmän keskeisinä vahvuuksina pidetään:

- Itä-Suomen yliopistossa toimii työhönsä sitoutunut ja systemaattisesti työskentelevä laaturyhmä, joka tukee korkeakoulun avointa laatukulttuuria.
- Päälaatukäsikirja, joka on laatujärjestelmän selkäranka, on selkeä, kattava ja helposti eri käyttäjäryhmien käytettävissä.
- Systemaattiset sisäiset auditoinnit ja vertaisoppiminen tuottavat tietoa laatutyön vaiheista ja järkevöittävät laatutyötä tukevia toimintoja.

Itä-Suomen yliopistolle esitetään muun muassa seuraavia kehittämissuosituksia:

- Auditointiryhmä kehottaa Itä-Suomen yliopistoa määrittelemään systemaattisemmin sidosryhmien roolin yliopiston laatutyössä. Auditointiryhmä suosittelee, että yliopisto harkitsisi laadullisten indikaattoreiden käyttöönottoa tehostamaan alueellista ja kansainvälistä vaikuttavuutta.
- Korkeakoulun johdon tulisi kehittää selkeä ja organisaatiossa yleisesti sovellettava tulkinta korkeakoulun strategisista avainkäsitteistä, joita ovat muun muassa opiskelijakeskeisyys ja kansainvälistyminen, ja välittää tämä tulkinta kaikkien sidosryhmien tietoon. Auditointiryhmä rohkaisee yliopistoa järjestämään henkilöstölle enemmän koulutusmahdollisuuksia, joilla edistetään strategisten avainkäsitteiden yhdenmukaista tulkintaa.
- Akateemisissa yksiköissä käytettävien laatukäsikirjojen määrä on tällä hetkellä suuri. Yliopiston pitäisi kiinnittää tähän huomiota, jotta operationaalinen laatutyö olisi mahdollisimman mutkatonta, johdonmukaista ja helppotajuista.

Avainsanat

Arviointi, auditointi, korkeakoulut, laadunhallinta, laatu, laatujärjestelmä, yliopisto

Sammandrag

Utgivare

Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering

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Författare

Timo Aarrevaara, Eva Werner, Gabriele Althoff, Juha Isotalo, Christopher Stephens, Marja-Liisa Saarilampi och Kati Isoaho

Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering har genomfört en auditering av Östra Finlands universitet och har beviljat högskolan en kvalitetsstämpel som gäller i sex år från och med den 21 april 2016. Universitetets kvalitetssystem uppfyller de nationella kriterierna för kvalitetshantering som fastställts för högskolor och motsvarar de europeiska principerna för och rekommendationerna om högskolornas kvalitetshantering.

Föremål för auditeringen var Östra Finlands universitets kvalitetssystem som högskolan tagit fram utifrån sina egna utgångspunkter och mål. Auditeringsobjektet som högskolan kunde fritt välja var kvalitetshantering av International academic affairs, arriving and leaving exchange students.

Kvalitetssystemets viktigaste styrkor är:

- Den öppna kvalitetskulturen vid Östra Finlands universitet stöds av ett engagerat kvalitetsteam som arbetar systematiskt.
- Kvalitetsmanualen är stommen i systemet. Den är tydlig och omfattande och är tillgänglig för olika användare.
- Systematiska interna auditeringar och benchmarking ger information om kvalitetsarbetets olika faser och ger mer struktur åt kvalitetsrelaterade aktiviteter.

Bland annat följande rekommendationer framläggs för Östra Finlands universitet:

- Auditeringsgruppen råder Östra Finlands universitet att engagera sig mer systematiskt med intressenter när det gäller att definiera deras roll i universitetets kvalitetsarbete. Auditeringsgruppen rekommenderar att kvalitativa indikatorer tas fram för att mäta regional och internationell genomslagskraft.
- Universitetets ledare bör utveckla en tydlig och universitetsövergripande tolkning av strategiska nyckelbegrepp, såsom studentcentrerat angreppssätt och internationalisering, och kommunicera dessa till alla intressenter. Auditeringsgruppen uppmuntrar universitetet att erbjuda mer utbildning för personalen med syfte att stödja den gemensamma tolkningen av strategiska nyckelbegrepp.
- Universitetet borde se över det stora antalet lokala kvalitetsmanualer för att göra det operativa kvalitetsarbetet så enkelt, konsekvent och förståeligt som möjligt.

Nyckelord

Auditering, högskolor, kvalitet, kvalitetshantering, kvalitetssystem, universitet, utvärdering

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Description of the audit process

1.1 Audit targets

The target of the audit is the quality system that the University of Eastern Finland has developed based on its own needs and goals. The focus of the audit were the procedures and processes that the institution uses to maintain, develop and enhance the quality of its operations. In accordance with the principle of enhancement-led evaluation, the audit did not evaluate the higher education institution's (HEI) objectives, the content of its activities or its results. The aim of the audit is to help the institution to identify strengths, good practices and areas in need of development in its own operations.

FINEEC audits evaluate whether an institution's quality system meets the national criteria (Appendix 1) and whether it corresponds to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area¹ (ESG). Furthermore, the audit evaluates how well the quality system meets strategic and operations management needs, as well as the quality management of the HEI's core duties and the extent to which it is comprehensive and effective. In addition, FINEEC audits focus on evaluating the institution's quality policy, the development of the quality system, as well as how effective and dynamic an entity the system forms.

The University of Eastern Finland chose "*Quality management of International academic affairs, arriving and leaving exchange students*" as its optional audit target. As samples of degree education, the university chose the Master's Programme in Pharmacy as well as the Doctoral Programme in Forests and Bioresources (FORES). As the third sample of degree education, the audit team chose the international Master's programme Border Crossings: Global and Local Societies in Transition.

¹ Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area are available at <http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg/>

The audit targets for the University of Eastern Finland comprise the following aspects:

1. The quality policy of the higher education institution
2. The quality system's link with strategic management
3. Development of the quality system
4. Quality management of the higher education institution's core duties:
 - a. Degree education (including first-, second- and third-cycle education)²
 - b. Research, development and innovation activities (RDI), as well as artistic activities
 - c. The societal impact and regional development work³
 - d. Optional audit target: Quality management of International academic affairs, arriving and leaving exchange students
5. Samples of degree education:
 - i. Master's Programme in Pharmacy
 - ii. Doctoral Programme in Forests and Bioresources
 - iii. Master's Programme Border Crossings: Global and Local Societies in Transition
6. The quality system as a whole.

A set of criteria that is based on a scale of four development stages of quality management (absent, emerging, developing and advanced), is employed in the audit. The development stages have been specified for each audit target and they are determined individually for each audit target. The optional audit target is not taken into account when evaluating whether the audit will pass.

1.2 Implementation of the audit

The audit is based on the basic material and self-evaluation report submitted by the University of Eastern Finland as well as an audit visit to the institution on 13–15 December 2016. The audit team also had access to electronic materials, which are essential in terms of the institution's quality management. The key phases of the audit process and the timetable are included as Appendix 2 of this report.

As chosen by the University of Eastern Finland, the audit was conducted in English by an international audit team. Prior to the appointment of the audit team, the university was given the opportunity to comment on the team's composition, especially from the perspective of disqualification.

²First-cycle degrees include bachelor's degrees, and second-cycle degrees include master's degrees. Third-cycle degrees include postgraduate licentiate and doctoral degrees.

³Including social responsibility, continuing education, open university education, as well as paid-services education

The audit team:

Timo Aarrevaara, Professor, University of Lapland, Finland (chair)

Eva Werner, Rector, IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems, Austria (vice-chair)

Gabriele Althoff, Head of International DAAD Academy (Germany)

Juha Isotalo, Student, University of Turku, Finland

Christopher Stephens, Emeritus professor, University of Southampton, UK

Marja-Liisa Saarilammi, Counsellor of Evaluation from FINEEC, acted as the responsible project manager and **Kati Isoaho**, Senior Advisor from FINEEC, as the backup for the project manager.

The audit visit to the University of Eastern Finland was conducted as a three-day visit. The purpose of the audit visit was to verify and supplement the observations made based on the audit material of the university's quality system. The programme of the visit is included as Appendix 3 of this report. The audit team drafted a report based on the material accumulated during the evaluation and on the analysis of that material.

The audit report was written collaboratively by the audit team members, drawing on the expertise of each team member. The University of Eastern Finland was given the opportunity to check the factual information in the report before the report was published.

The organisation of the University of Eastern Finland

The University of Eastern Finland (UEF) was established in 2010 as the result of a merger between the University of Joensuu and the University of Kuopio. The university's campuses are located in Joensuu, Kuopio and Savonlinna. UEF is a multidisciplinary university, which offers teaching in more than 100 major subjects. The university has four faculties: the Philosophical Faculty, the Faculty of Science and Forestry, the Faculty of Health Sciences, and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Business Studies (Figure 1). Furthermore, there are following independent institutes: Pharmacy, Aducate, Language Centre, Library. The Philosophical Faculty hosts two teacher training schools: the Joensuu Teacher Training School and Savonlinna Teacher Training School.

ORGANISATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

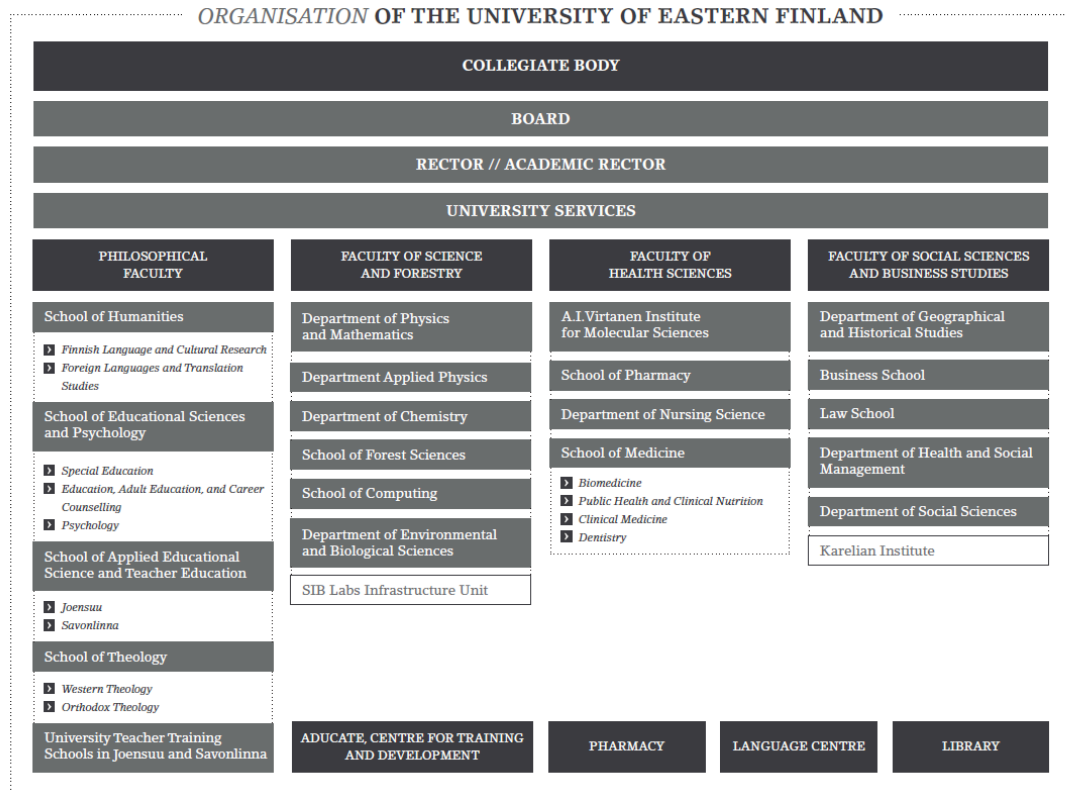


FIGURE 1: Organisation of the University of Eastern Finland

In the close vicinity of the campuses, several national-level research institutes, the European Forest Institute, Kuopio University Hospital, some technology parks and knowledge-based enterprises are located. UEF has strategic collaboration agreements in research with the Natural Resources Institute Finland, the Finnish Environment Institute, the Finnish Meteorological Institute, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, the National Institute for Health and Welfare, the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, the Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira, and the Geological Survey of Finland.

The Board, the Rectors, the University Collegiate Body, the Faculty Councils and the Deans are responsible for the administration of the University. Based on the University's Administrative Regulations, UEF also has a Research Council, a Council for Teaching and Guidance, and a Board of Appeals.

The Board comprises 10 members, of whom 4 are external members. The Board defines the University's central goals and strategy. Furthermore, the Board elects the Rectors of the University.

The University of Eastern Finland has a Rector and an Academic Rector, both of whom are based at a different main campus of the University. The Rector attends to the tasks defined in the Universities Act, while the Academic Rector, operates on the other campus, and attends to tasks relating to teaching and research. The term of office of the Rectors is five years. The members of the UEF Leadership Group comprise the Rectors, the Deans and the Director of Administration. Directors of University Services attend the meetings in the role of permanent experts. The UEF Leadership Group prepares matters for decision-making for the Board and the Rectors. Furthermore, the UEF Leadership Group coordinates and prepares matters of the faculties and University Services.

The University Collegiate Body has a total of 24 members. Eight of the members represent the university's professors, eight represent the university's teaching, research and general staff, and eight represent the university's students. The term of office of the University Collegiate Body is four calendar years. The term of office of the members representing the university's students is two calendar years.

For the purposes of executing practical administrative tasks, the university has its own University Services. The tasks of University Services are described in the university's Administrative Regulations, and these tasks are carried out at the different campuses by Executive Services, Human Resources Services, Development Services, Student and Learning Services, Financial Services and IT Services.

Each of the faculties at the University has an Administration Service Centre managed by an Executive Head of Administration who is subordinate to the Dean. The Administration Service Centre is responsible for providing supporting services for the faculty's teaching and research activities and for other supporting services that the faculty requires. Its responsibilities encompass the faculty's general, financial, human resources as well as academic and student administration.

TABLE 1: Basic statistics of UEF in 2015. Source: National Vipunen database

All students (full-time equivalent FTE, both domestic and international)	Number
Bachelor's degree	6,636
Master's degree	4,007
Licentiate degree	50
Doctoral degree	767
International degree students (present and non-present)	Number
Bachelor's degree	40
Master's degree	637
Licentiate degree	2
Doctoral degree	342
Degrees awarded: yearly average in 2013–2015	Number
Bachelor's degree	1,274
Master's degree	1,349
Licentiate degree	11
Doctoral degree	159
Staff	Number
Teaching and research staff	1,417
Other staff	884

The quality policy

The quality system of the UEF is the outcome of “the best of two systems” developed after the merger in 2010 and refined over the succeeding years. The backbone of the process-led quality management system and thus the institution’s quality work is the Main Quality Manual (and its faculty- and unit-oriented supplements) which contain comprehensive information on key, core and support processes, as well as responsibilities and tasks. The rationale and objectives of the quality policy are the outcomes of an inclusive strategy development process which assures the linkage between strategy and quality work.

Information on quality issues and the institution’s quality policy is communicated through various tools and channels, ranging from websites to personal contacts. However, there is a slight tendency to lose systematicity in information delivery, and the integration of stakeholders is not always clearly visible.

The constant linkage of the University of Eastern Finland quality policy to the institutional strategy and strategic goals is assured and monitored through periodic quality review cycles based on the PDCA model as part of the overall operational quality management system architecture.

*The quality policy of the University of Eastern Finland is at a **developing** stage.*

3.1 Rationale, objectives and division of responsibility

The quality policy of the University of Eastern Finland (UEF) is firmly rooted in the institution’s strategy focusing on the continuous development of the core areas research, education and social interaction, thus fostering the attainment of the institution’s mission to be in the university’s own words, “... an international, multidisciplinary and student-centred university. Our high standard of research and appealing academic offering build the competence base of the future.” Furthermore, the university sets its vision to be, “... an internationally attractive university, which seeks to find interdisciplinary solutions to global challenges.”

The rationale of the quality management system as laid down in the Self Evaluation Report is to “support the implementation of the strategy and the continuous systematic development of the key, core and support processes according to the PDCA cycle” aiming at the same time to develop a common understanding of quality and quality culture as a follow-up of the merger process that had taken place in 2010. The Quality Standards of the European Higher Education Area, of FINEEC and of the Finnish Universities’ Act serve as the backbones of the quality policy and the quality management system, with the Main Quality Manual as the institutional documentary backbone which describes the overall quality policy requirements, objectives and responsibilities, as well as operational processes in detail.

The Quality Management System (QMS) itself is process-oriented thus featuring aspects of ISO 9001 standards, such as having a clear definition of purpose, a person in charge, and specifying the objectives and actors involved in each process. Processes are anchored at different institutional levels with internal and external stakeholder involvement thus serving the aim of making quality work an operational feature and not an aim unto itself.

The objectives of the Quality Management System as laid down in the Main Quality Manual underpin the QMS rationale and thus the institution’s strategy through defined operational processes, procedures and data. Indicators, feedback, performance appraisals and regular review processes, such as internal audits and management reviews, as well as participation in international quality assurance procedures help monitoring the achievement of the set objectives, as well as the evaluation of the functionality of the Quality Management System overall. Developed on the basis of internal and external quality enhancement procedures as well as on the current national legislation and regulations, the overall QMS architecture follows the PDCA cycle as illustrated in the main Quality Manual and thus takes into account the principle of continuous development (Figure 2).

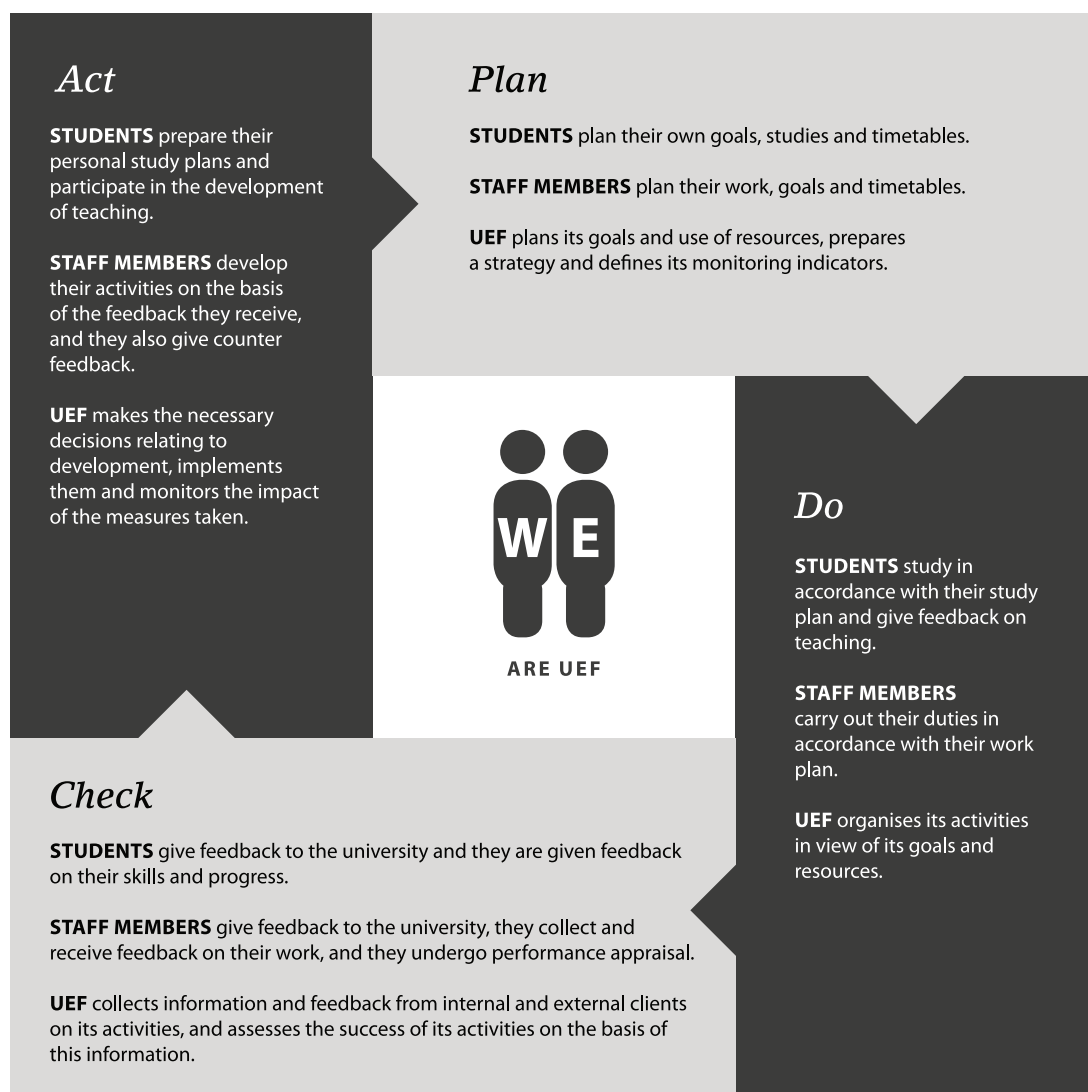


FIGURE 2: UEF's Plan-Do-Check-Act model

As can be seen from the figure, the quality cycle embraces the entire institution and so does the institutional quality policy, which stems from the conviction that quality work is part of each and everyone's daily responsibilities and quality per se is a commonly shared value. The quality policy and quality work are approved by the University Board and implemented and executed through various actors, with the Leadership Group acting as steering committee and the quality manager as the operational driver.

The challenge of establishing a quality management system for an institution that is not only the result of a merger of two institutions but still has to serve different campuses and different disciplines with again different backgrounds and histories has been well mastered since 2010 when institutional quality objectives were set for the first time as result of a common and inclusive institutional process.

The responsibilities for quality work and quality management are clearly defined and outlined in the Main Quality Manual, with the overall responsibility for the development of quality work being attributed to the University Board, and the Rectors assuming a shared responsibility according to the division of tasks. Staff from different levels are responsibly involved in QM procedures and tasks, and students contribute their share through feedback and participation in various working groups and committees, or even by acting as auditors in internal audits.

During the interviews, the audit team learned that internal and external stakeholders appreciate the institution's quality work and are highly committed to contributing their share to the attainment of quality objectives and to make the institutional quality policy as operational as possible. Thus, there was clear evidence of the progress the institution has made in this respect since the last audit.

Yet, although the interviews revealed a high level of quality commitment and a widely-adopted quality culture and policy, the audit team was partially confronted with diverging interpretations of quality understanding and approaches to quality procedures. This may be due to the numerous quality manuals in addition to the Main Quality Manual and hence the resulting differences in operations. In order to reduce this scope of variance in quality perception and the interpretation of quality culture, the number of quality manuals could be reduced thus leading to a stricter systematisation of processes and procedures and more focused communication at the same time.

3.2 Communication of the quality policy

The quality policy, the quality system objectives, the underlying principles as well as the related quality procedures are laid down in the Main Quality Manual. For information on quality issues, university uses various channels such as meetings, documentation and websites taking into account the different internal and external target groups and their practices of communication. Quality issues as well as information and data produced to steer quality processes are regularly on the agenda of meetings and working groups on various institutional levels. Informal information channels such as staff or team meetings also play an important role, and were mentioned in the interviews.

In order to facilitate the accessibility of information and the exchange of information, the university's *Digi Steering Group* is developing a new online work environment, together with the communication tool Yammer – both tools are expected to enhance information on quality issues irrespective of time and place.

External stakeholders can access the official information given on the website, and more comprehensive communication is available in a versatile manner, or dependent on the degree of integration into university matters, or can be obtained through personal relationships as the audit team learned in the interviews.

Students are made familiar with quality issues through a special brochure which is distributed annually. Furthermore, an optional course on quality assurance is offered to raise both interest and awareness of quality work among the students. As students are also part of various working groups as mentioned above, their general inclusion into quality work is assured. Quality-related data and information also stem from feedback and surveys including alumni surveys. However, students especially are highly reluctant to respond to evaluations. This view was also shared with the audit team during the interviews with students and staff with both stressing that direct communication between students and teachers was preferred, such as the interaction and communication experienced during the so-called “Teaching Days” or “Feedback Days”.

Because quality policy is linked to quality indicators, the university-wide data warehouse and reporting entity called *Miilu* play a key-role in making quality-related communication easily accessible. According to the responsible persons interviewed, all executive groups receive sufficient and up-to-date information needed in order to steer the institution and monitor the QM cycles on the different levels. Indicators and objectives are checked periodically in review meetings, with information and data stemming from various sources and evaluated according to the set targets of the faculties and units. Good practices are also shared and communicated through various channels in order to stimulate followers. As an example, the flipped classroom experience was repeatedly mentioned during the interviews.

The audit team appreciates the proactive and institution-wide communication of quality and quality policy issues at the University of Eastern Finland including the institutionalised dissemination of good-practices. The team also recommends reducing the number of quality manuals thus streamlining QM information and documentation, and advises the university to integrate communication to external stakeholders, including alumni more systematically into the various quality cycles.

3.3 Link between the quality policy and the institution’s overall strategy

The strategy of the University of Eastern Finland is based on the institution’s vision to be “an internationally attractive university, which seeks to find interdisciplinary solutions to global challenges” and this is translated into strategic goals relating to research, education and social impact. The current strategy was approved by the Board after a comprehensive and inclusive institutional process engaging internal and external stakeholders and building on the results of preceding preparatory projects. The quality policy of university is, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, firmly rooted in the institution’s strategy, the linkage being made concrete through a clear input–output cycle taking customers’ and stakeholders’ needs into consideration and aiming at customers’ and stakeholders satisfaction.



FIGURE 3: The connection between strategic leadership and quality work

The essential features of this process are illustrated in the Figure 3 which is supplemented by the descriptions of functions, tasks and responsibilities, as well as core processes in the Main Quality Manual and the information given in the Strategic Implementation Programme.

The quality cycles and processes relating to the strategic goals of the institution, as well as periodic management reviews, internal audits and benchmarking exercises support the systematic linkage between strategy and quality and monitor the attainment of university's strategic and quality objectives.

Even though all the interviewed groups of university's staff and external stakeholders emphasised their commitment to the institution's strategy and quality policy, some dissonance in perception and the interpretation of the *what, why and how* of the strategic goals became evident in some interviews. This concerned e.g. student-centred university, a fact which the Leadership Group should take on its communication agenda.

Quality system's link with strategic management

The quality system and the monitoring tools produce information that serves strategic and operational management. Established procedures ensure that the information produced is implemented and communicated systematically. The system works quite systematically at various levels of the university involving personnel groups, students and external stakeholders in a meaningful manner. However, the procedures to involve external stakeholders in the quality system could be stronger.

Based on the audit visit, it is evident that the university community is engaged in quality work. The audit team confirmed the strengths and areas for development identified in the self-evaluation document. There is evidence of an internal process for strategic and operational management linked to the quality system.

*The quality system's link with strategic management is at a **developing** stage.*

4.1 Information produced by the quality system for strategic management

The University of Eastern Finland has developed a well-functioning process for strategic steering and management based on its approach to quality management. The information is provided by periodic management reviews, annual reviews, internal audits and benchmarking exercises, evaluations, surveys, feedback from students and continual enhancement of its core activities.

The university relies on monitoring tools systems, such as Miilu for reporting, Massi for financial reporting, Proha for the preparation phase of research, the human resources management system and Saima for recruitment. The Leadership group monitors the key operational results regularly and implements risk assessments. The defined indicators seem to be relevant and able to support decision-making and information is used quite systematically at various levels of the university.

Internal budgeting and resource allocation are used as a tool for strategic steering and are linked to quality management. Figure 3 (chapter 3.3) shows the connection between strategic leadership and quality work. The leadership team are regularly presented with a large volume of performance measures in varying detail, which relate to the university and its units, and are intended to support the strategic management.

The University Board, as the highest decision-making body, approves the main versions of the university's Main Quality Manual. The Leadership Group of the university is the highest strategic planning body. The steering group for quality work consists of the "KARVI" team who support the work of the university's Quality Manager and Quality Coordinator. There are Boards for evaluation and development of teaching and research, as well as planning bodies chaired by the Academic Rector. In the audit visit the audit team were reassured that the division of responsibilities in quality matters among the different groups of staff members appears to work effectively.

The focus of the quality system is largely on collecting feedback and data from the community in numerous ways to identify possible problems, development needs and best practices. The system of collecting information and feedback may have grown somewhat organically in the two previous organisations, and thus might benefit from being made more systematic.

The University of Eastern Finland has developed a number of innovative regional and global strategic aims. The new strategy is built around global challenges, for which the university seeks to find solutions through interdisciplinary research and education. The challenges that the university is focusing on are: ageing, lifestyles and health; learning in a digitised society; cultural encounters, mobility and borders' – , and environmental change and sufficiency of natural resources. Internal budgeting and resource allocation is used as a tool for strategic steering and is linked to quality management and producing relevant information. Planned changes for the 2017 information and administrative systems will probably help to make the information produced by the quality system more open and transparent.

4.2 Functioning of the quality system at different organisational levels and units

The leadership is committed to ensuring that all actors engages in the quality management processes and produces information for the university staff, students and external stakeholders. Good practices are spread with the help of internal audits and benchmarking and about 50 staff members have already been trained as internal auditors. In addition, a student auditor participates in the audits of at least all faculties and units that provide teaching. Staff interviewed by the audit team were aware of the quality system that is embedded in the management and steering of the institution. However, despite the efforts, there are still areas that need to be developed. The use of the quality system depends on the area: it is stronger in research and education and weaker in societal impact – the latter being an area that is much harder to monitor. Communication to external stakeholders could be more proactive. Clearly, the merger required top-down steering,

even if consultation and the establishment of a variety of university-wide groups to work on various aspects promoted a shared understanding of the university profile and strategy. Although the system works quite systematically at various levels of the university, the audit team encourages the university to arrange more training for the personnel to support the strategy-driven process.

The self-evaluation report and the interviews made it clear that university is well aware of the needs to develop certain links between its quality system and strategic management. As mentioned in chapter 3.3, some interviews indicated that there was not a clear and commonly shared understanding of what “*student centred*” means and how the quality system might measure this. One commendable strategic goal of the university is to provide the best learning environment in Finland by 2020, but what exactly is meant by this, and what outcomes would be measured to prove attainment, were not absolutely clear.

In the further development of the quality system, the audit group recommends focusing on a smaller number of input channels, analysing, and disseminating the information collected in a manner that feeds more directly into strategic management processes. It also makes it difficult to ensure that development ideas are implemented and followed up across the organisation. This is recognised in the University of Eastern Finland’s self-evaluation report and the interviews confirmed that the multiple information channels need to be brought together to provide intelligible information that can be used to steer and manage the institution.

The interviews with student services staff indicated that the recent reorganisation of administrative and support services has clarified their role and their connection to the school and department levels. Interviews with the services’ directors and service staff confirmed that the aim has been to bring services closer to the teaching staff and students. In addition to the structural reorganisation, the services’ leadership promoted a shift towards a more customer-oriented service culture.

The university has taken very positive steps to strengthen the role of the students in various development teams and decision-making bodies. Having student members in the internal auditors and student participation in benchmarking and audit interviews is a good practice.

4.3 Quality culture

The quality mechanisms encourage all actors to contribute the quality management processes. Since the merger of the two universities in 2010, the University of Eastern Finland has been successful in its attempts to create a common quality culture for the institution. This has been achieved through the representation of the university community, including staff, students and stakeholders, in governing bodies and working groups, as well as the extensive use of workshops and internal consultative procedures. Interviews with the University Board representatives and external stakeholders showed their strong commitment to the university’s goals and activities.

Strengths include providing information on the quality and productivity of activities through information systems; systematic internal audits that provide information on the phases of quality work and bring more structure to quality-related activities; and that collected information and feedback, such as that generated by the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) is utilised by the university.

Information on quality work is communicated openly, including via the intranet and systematic internal audits and quality teams. In order to further advance the development of a quality culture, the institution needs to develop outcomes that link to all the strategic goals, and it should provide information and the progress of the goals in new ways to all staff and stakeholders. It could provide a dashboard of hard and softer indicators to explore performance covering a range of indicators giving different perspectives. The key developing effective performance measure indicators will be to align them to the strategic goals. Having a bold educational goal is commendable, but one of the issues the leadership team will need to engage with is to identify indicators of educational quality justify their claim to providing the best student centred learning environment in Finland.

Development of the quality system

The University of Eastern Finland has developed its quality system in a systematic way enabling stronger involvement of students and other stakeholders. The system is based loosely on the ISO system, but follows the PDCA cycle focusing on continuous improvement. The quality system works well and since the first audit the development has been systematic, but not all of the feedback is aggregated for the development of useful information. The number of quantitative indicators is high, yet there is a need to develop qualitative indicators as well. The system identifies the shortcomings well, and development steps are being taken as consequence of internal audits. All in all, the system works smoothly and better than it did during the previous audit.

*The development of the quality system is at a **developing** stage.*

5.1 Procedures for developing the quality system

The aim of the University of Eastern Finland regarding its quality system is for its development to be continuous and based on internal and external audits as well as management reviews. The starting point of the university's current strategy is sustainable development and the principles of responsibility, and these principles are also linked to the quality management system. The self-evaluation report describes how the quality management system supports the development of core processes and principles of global responsibility, multiculturalism, equality, justice and openness.

The merger of the two antecedent universities and the establishment of the University of Eastern Finland took place in 2010, and since then a united quality culture has been developing. There are disciplinary differences in interpretation of the quality culture, such as between laboratory-based disciplines and others, because the laboratories follow the ISO standards more closely, including the use of check lists as a basis for quality system development. Outside the laboratories, the quality culture is more often based on the development of processes. Thus, the university sets process development as one of its development targets in the self-evaluation report.

As was the case in the audit of 2011, the quality system still follows the ISO system loosely because anomalies are not the target of the reports and the internal audits do not take place as often as defined in the ISO standards. The internal audits have a definite value in the continuous development approach. According to responses in the interviews, the quality manuals are updated and the data collected are used for development as a part of internal audits. Internal audits are implemented and reported in a systematic way. The students' role has become stronger in terms of student participation. The feedback practices in Finnish and English have been improved in recent years, but it takes time to develop quality practices for classes containing students of different nationalities and different languages. The process descriptions in the self-evaluation reports are undertaken by the faculties in co-operation with the University Services. As confirmed in the interviews, those in charge of quality management in their units have participated regularly as their role in the system's development is a defined part of their function. The development of the system is also taking place in academic units and services as was confirmed in the interviews. The great number of internal audits has had a beneficial impact on the merger and continuously supports the further development of the institutional quality culture.

5.2 Development work after the previous audit

The University of Eastern Finland passed the FINHEEC audit in 2011. In the report for that audit, the need for more coherence in developing the university's quality system was identified. In particular, development areas were identified for the integrity of the documentation, pruning the number of indicators and focusing the objectives for societal interaction. There was also a proposal to extend the implementation plan to several years. The university has documented the development of the quality system since the Audit report of 2011. The self-evaluation report of the University describes developments which have taken place in the period from 2011 to 2016. This work has been guided by a systematic progress plan, which has been instigated in connection with management reviews. Some of the proposals of the previous audit had lost some of their relevance because of changes in the organisation and its functioning. The developments since the previous audit have taken place systematically in the areas of quality system, management and internationalisation.

The university has carried out a harmonisation of its quality assurance/management practices, and the number of Quality Manuals has been reduced significantly. The still existing high number of manuals makes the system complex and bottom-heavy, and differences in practices are recognised particularly in the Faculty of Health sciences. The system of quality training has been enhanced, with the aim of harmonising process descriptions and processes. The work with indicators is more focused, and qualitative indicators relating to research have been defined. During the interviews, the problems of defining quality indicators for other core areas and their fitness for measurement and respectively their fitness for purpose were discussed. The citation and publishing practices of various disciplines are being taken into account through a national quality classification of publications. During the interviews, it became evident that the role of the indicators is clear in assessing strategic research areas. However, national indicators are only quantitative in nature

According to the quality documentation, the quality manuals will be updated whenever necessary based on the idea of avoiding repeated routines and to focus on the production of relevant information for the various units of the university. This was confirmed in the interviews as a valuable practice.

Performance appraisal discussions are held, as mentioned according to university self-evaluation report and the audit interviews, yet the benefits of these discussions are not clear to all staff members. A foresight project has been established and was seen as part of preparing the overall university strategy. Providing counter feedback in the education feedback system has been discussed to a great extent during internal audits and benchmarking, but based on the small numbers of respondents the question of anonymity has been identified as a development target. A renewed feedback system description is being completed, and the opportunity for students' counter feedback is being developed in the OODI system. As was confirmed in the interviews, there is an ongoing overall development process in data information systems.

The stakeholders' role is being enhanced in the quality system as a part of the societal interaction process. Furthermore, the entrepreneurship and innovation process has been developed with the aim of identifying promising new projects. Quality objectives have also been specified for the University Services. Indicators have been selected and process descriptions have been prepared.

Since the last audit, the quality management has improved as new indicators have been taken into use along with the new strategy in 2014 / 2015. The process of external funding has been developed with more effort being taken in analysing and managing risks related to external funding. Attention has been paid to recruitment practices, and more attention is being paid to orientation practices and undertaking appraisal discussions in Finnish or English.

In the audit report of 2011, attention was paid to the students' participation in the institution's quality management. In the current situation, the University Leadership holds joint meetings with the Student Union and representatives of the Student Union participate in management reviews at the university level, thus clearly enhancing students' participation in quality work.

Compared to the last audit, internationalisation has grown in some respect. Thus, instructions and basic information about the university is available in English. More human resources are being made available to support international students and researchers. Internationalisation in general and as it relates to EU research grants is now more goal-oriented, particularly benefitting from growing networking activities.

Quality management of the institution's core duties

6.1 Degree education

The quality management procedures relating to degree education as laid down in the Main Quality Manual relate to the essential steps of a programme's life-cycle from planning to implementation and evaluation, and follow the PDCA cycle in principle. They underpin the institution's quality work, and are mostly functional and appropriate for advancing the degree programmes. The mainly quantitative indicators support the set objectives in an adequate way. The information produced and used for the purpose of further development of the programmes need more stringent monitoring in order to be deployed for full efficiency. This refers particularly to tackling students' feedback and integrating external stakeholders' views. The rather large number of additional quality manuals as well as their comprehensiveness should be reconsidered in order to make quality work as operational as possible and easily understandable. The support services are manifold and their quality management, which is laid down in a specific UEF Services Manual, function in a very satisfactory way.

*The quality management of degree education is at a **developing** stage.*

Objectives of degree education

The University of Eastern Finland's objectives for the institution's degree education are mirrored in the vision, the mission and the set strategic goals and form the overarching principle of the institution's quality work in this core duty. The institutional strategy stipulates as a set goal for 2020, that, "*The University's teaching is based on the latest research findings and we train experts for tomorrow's working life,*" as well as, "*We are home to Finland's best academic learning environments and most efficient study processes. Our academic offering is appealing, our teaching is student-centred and our students graduate within the target time.*" Hence, interdisciplinarity, student-centredness linked to skills development for the needs of the future working life, and research-orientation are the main drivers in all faculties and their respective degree education, comprising all three levels of the European Higher Education Area degree architecture, i.e. Bachelor's and Master's programmes as

well as Doctoral studies. Quality indicators referring to degree education are mainly quantitative and in line with those stipulated by the national authorities, as well as internationally relevant research indicators, such as numbers of publications, the volume of research funds et cetera. Furthermore, process-specific targets laid down and communicated in the Main Quality Manual are set in order to monitor the attainment of the set quality objectives which underpin the overall strategic goals. Various boards and teams such as the Teaching and Guidance Advisory Board, OKKE (Coordination and Development Team for Guidance) or OVA (Academic Heads' Team) attend to the functioning of the processes and assure the involvement of different groups and stakeholders in the respective quality work.

The nexus of research and teaching aims at the provision of interdisciplinary solutions thus creating a sustainable basis for graduates' employability and their responsible contribution to the future of society, which directly relates to the institution's vision and mission. Four global challenges – 1. *Ageing, lifestyles and health*, 2. *Learning in a digitised society*, 3. *Cultural encounters, mobilities and borders*, and 4. *Environmental change and insufficiency of natural resources* – are identified as relevant to the institution's education and research activities during the strategy development process and provide the thematic framework to these core processes.

The above-mentioned nexus of research and teaching underpins the institution's strategic goal of being “*among the world's leading 50 universities in our strong research areas*” and is translated into high-quality post-graduate degree education assembled in the Doctoral school of the university. Quality management of post-graduate education is similar to first and second degree education and is process-oriented, with the Academic Rector as the person in charge and the Research Council as a steering committee. The recently undertaken changes (2015) in the structure of the doctoral programmes still need more time to reach their full effectiveness, nevertheless the first feedback is positive on the activities already established. The feedback on the *transferable skills studies curriculum* is particularly promising and worth being mentioned as an example of good practice.

Functioning of the quality management procedures

The quality management procedures relating to degree education at the different levels are laid down in the Main Quality Manual with explicit explanations and descriptions of the processes, the responsibilities of the individual persons, with depictions of working groups and stakeholders, sources of information, and evaluation cycles. Hence, in principle, the processes surrounding the core duty of providing degree education follows the Deming cycle of *plan-do-check-act*. This is translated into respective sub-processes for the programme life-cycle, such as student recruitment and admissions, designing and approving new programmes, as well as planning education, teaching and guidance, (plan), implementation of programmes, education and guidance, as well as teaching (do), the evaluation of teaching and guidance, as well as collecting feedback from various groups (check), followed by the final step of further development of education and guidance (act). The overall responsibility for the core process of education and its sub-processes, the processes for Bachelor's and Master's degree education, as well as process of doctoral studies lies with the Academic Rector, who is supported by various councils, groups and teams for specified tasks

as mentioned above. The individual faculties are responsible for the assurance of the quality management of their own programmes' life-cycles, and this is specified in individual faculty quality manuals.

Education design and development is linked to the university's strategy and the formulated strategic goals. Stakeholders' views stemming from external steering groups, alumni, representatives of working life and researchers, among others, provide essential input for programme design as well as teaching methods with a view both to work-life relevance and research-orientation. As internationalisation is firmly anchored in the institutional strategy, the resulting diversity of the university's student body is seen as a driver for the further development of teaching and learning. Implementation of degree education therefore takes into consideration student-centred university, as well as the provision of a learning environment imbued with the intention to innovate in pedagogy and enhance students' skills development, to provide support for students' study planning processes, monitor students' well-being, to develop teachers' competences and foster interdisciplinarity. The evaluation of the education process and the functionality of the quality management system are assessed in various forms, ranging from feedback surveys to internal audits with the annual management reviews as an overall institutional "check point".

With regards to doctoral education, the quality management cycle also comprises the design of the curriculum, as well as student admissions (plan), the implementation of the programme and its guidance (do), the evaluation and assessment of the programmes monitored by the Research Council but also by the Leadership Group and faculty-based research committees (check), and the further development of the programmes based on the outcome of feedback surveys, targets and indicator attainment.

The interviews during the site-visit provided evidence that University of Eastern Finland's staff is aware of the existing procedures and to a large extent assured that these support the design, planning, implementation and execution of the programmes as well as their further development. It was, however also mentioned that the co-existence of numerous different quality manuals – on an institutional level as well as on faculty levels – is not always perceived to make quality work easier. To the contrary this makes it more complicated, particularly as these manuals are judged as too long and too complicated.

Feedback from various groups and stakeholders, both internal and external, as well as the results of review processes and quantitative indicators are all essential features of the quality management in the University of Eastern Finland's degree education. This view was shared and appreciated by the majority of the interviewed persons during the audit visit. However, the audit team also experienced that the feedback particularly from students and external stakeholders needed more systematisation. Students expressed their reluctance towards online course evaluations, and both external stakeholders and staff mentioned that a stricter and more systematic integration and follow-up of feedback cycles would improve the process, because currently most parties prefer to give feedback in informal and personalised ways. As mentioned above, regular management review meetings, internal audits and staff performance appraisal meetings, as well as feedback from all different parties involved in education produce relevant information which underpins the functionality of the quality procedures of degree programmes. So does the monitoring executed by

the Research Council concerning doctoral students' feedback, as well as the cooperation between the doctoral school and the doctoral programmes. Concerning a regular evaluation process for degree programmes, the interviewed persons admitted that some pilot evaluations had already been carried out and in principle such a process was planned and agreed upon. However, they also mentioned that its systematic implementation is still pending and needs stricter monitoring. These statements were complemented by the views that in the PDCA cycle, there was certainly room for improvement with regards to *checking* and *acting*.

The strategic goals set for the University of Eastern Finland's degree education is widely accepted and supported by academic and service staff. For example, student-centredness and the goal to become the best academic learning environment in Finland is seen in actual actions. The heterogeneity in the perception and interpretation, partly triggered by a strong discipline-focused identity, seems to be due to disruptions in communication between steering and executing bodies, respectively staff on the one side, and too many quality manuals and related regulations on the other. On the other hand, the audit team experienced direct translation of the strategic goal of interdisciplinarity and research-based education in the master's degree programmes and doctoral studies offered by the institution.

There was clear evidence that information produced by the Quality system was used for the enhancement and further development of degree education, such as the development of flipped classroom elements and the evaluation and dissemination of the impact these elements have on students' performance. The internal platform *Oppitupa* shares good practices concerning teaching, and is considered an example of good practice. Students of master's and doctoral programmes also confirmed that their feedback was used in improving the coaching process for their theses, and doctoral students underlined the excellent guidance they receive in their research process. The double degree options provided at doctoral level may also be considered a form of indirect benchmarking and thus are a quality-enhancing feature of doctoral studies.

The University of Eastern Finland's management understands quality work as part of everyone's daily operational work. Hence, procedures and sub-processes relating to the operating model of the quality management system for degree education comprise various groups and stakeholders – students, staff (teaching and researching) as well as external advisors and partners – thus creating inclusive involvement and participation. Not to forget the quality management team who act as drivers of the overall operational quality work.

In the interviews the audit team experienced a strong sense of commitment to the quality work of the management and leadership teams, from the staff – both teaching and researching – and students. As representatives of various personnel groups are also engaged in the execution of internal audits, quality work becomes a “live experience” and thus contributes to the enhancement of the quality culture. External stakeholders are integrated in quality work mostly on a faculty or degree programme level, with respect to both teaching and research, yet with a strong tendency towards integration based on personal relationships rather than on systematic involvement.

Students are trained as internal auditors and also have a seat in various councils and boards thus being actively involved in the institution's quality work. The essential part in quality work attributed to students is their feedback on courses and degree education, however, this feature particularly needs improvement in terms of encouraging students to more widely participate in the non-personal feedback opportunities. Hence, the audit team strongly advises the institution to seek ways to encourage bachelor students, especially, to use the online feedback system and come up with a stricter systematisation and monitoring of the counter feedback process. The recommendation for stricter systematisation also holds good for the integration of external stakeholders' views in the degree education quality management and the evaluation process for degree programmes in general.

During the interviews, the audit team learned that the workload generated by the quality management procedures was sometimes seen as an extra time consuming feature, however all interviewees assured the team that the quality work was extremely important both for the sake of the students, the graduates' outcome, and the reputation of the institution and thus expressed their strong commitment to quality work as part of their daily activities.

Quality management of key support services

The university provides a number of key services both for students and staff for which specific quality objectives and quality indicators apply and which were selected during the recent development of quality work and laid down in the University Services Quality Manual. According to this manual and the statements during the interviews, the task of the University Services is to support the implementation and realisation of the university's strategy and its core duties through the provision of adequate support services to students, staff and clients in a professional, cost-effective and timely manner. The quality management system of the University Services is based on the principle of continuous development and designed to cover all the processes of the various units; thus the core processes to which University Services relate are:

- human resource services
- executive services
- development services
- students and learning services
- financial services
- IT services

The major support services such as Student and Learning Services and IT services have, in addition to the mentioned University's Services Quality Manual, their own manuals and regulations.

Like the Main Quality Manual, the Universities Services Quality Manual gives a detailed description of the processes, the objectives, as well as the purpose and persons in charge. Furthermore, the evaluation methods and respective assessment mechanisms for the functionality of the individual processes and support services are given.

For degree education at any level the *Human Resource Services* relating to staff development and work satisfaction as well as *Student and Learning Services*, including the services provided by the International Relations unit, the Language Centre, the IT and library services are of predominant importance. In particular, *the Student and Learning Services* cater for continuous development of pedagogy and learning environments thus playing an essential role in the students' progress in their studies. As with all services, feedback gathered from surveys, such as for instance the University Services' Feedback Survey, IT Services feedback or feedback from clients and stakeholders is collected and evaluated, and the evaluation of the service operations is also done on the basis of internal audits. During the annual University's Services Management Review the quality objectives of the key support services and their attainment are discussed, and so are the results of the previous year's internal audits. Furthermore, development measures for the improvements of the services quality management are defined thus closing the quality cycle of planning, doing, checking and acting.

Interviews during the site visit showed an overall satisfaction of students and staff with the key support services even though some fine tuning would be necessary, for instance with respect to IT systems and services or more encouragement and support for students when it comes to considering the option for periods of study abroad.

6.2 Samples of degree education

6.2.1 Bachelor's and Master's programmes in Pharmacy

The quality management procedures are comprehensive and enhance the Bachelor's and Master's Programme in Pharmacy. The audit showed that the quality system helps to maintain and develop the high quality and working life relevance of the programmes. The students and other stakeholders participate in the development of the programmes with various committees and working groups in which both internal and external stakeholders are represented. The impact of quality work is evaluated in the annual meeting reviews. Nevertheless, there are still areas for improvement for the programmes, especially concerning systematic use of formal student feedback and merging the goals of the university and those of the programmes. The quality management of the programmes is functional and clearly has an effect on the quality of the programmes.

*The quality management of the Degree Programmes in Pharmacy is at a **developing** stage.*

The Degree Programmes in Pharmacy are offered by the School of Pharmacy, which belongs to the Faculty of Health Sciences. The Bachelor's Programme in Pharmacy is a large degree programme with an annual student intake of 130. The Bachelor's Programme comprises 180 credits and duration of full-time studies is three years. The degree awarded after the completion of the Programme is a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy. Upon completion of the Bachelor's Programme the graduates are qualified to work as a licensed health care professionals in pharmacies. Their professional qualification is authorised by the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira). Furthermore, they are eligible to continue their studies in the Master's Programme in Pharmacy.

The Master's Programme in Pharmacy, with an intake of 55 students per year, aims at further developing the students' scientific skills and includes a research project at the end of the studies. The Master's Programme comprises 120 credits and the duration for full-time studies is two years. The degree awarded after the completion of the programme is a Master of Science in Pharmacy.

Teaching is offered in disciplines of bio-pharmacy, pharmaceutical chemistry, pharmaceutical technology, pharmacology, social pharmacy, and toxicology. Both programmes are designed to prepare students for professional practice. The Bachelor's Programme includes 30 credits/6 months of internship in a community or hospital pharmacy. It is also possible to include a training period in the Master's Programme. Graduates find employment in all sectors related to health, the majority in pharmacies (85 % of B.Sc.(Pharm) and >52 % of M.Sc.(Pharm) in the pharmaceutical industry, as well as in teaching and research positions and in authorities such as the Finnish Medicines Agency (Fimea).

Quality management related to the planning of educational provision

The overall responsibility for the programme planning process lies with the Education Planning Committee (KOSTI) as the key supervising body including both internal and external stakeholders. The process is led by the Deputy Head of the School. A lecturer position was established in 2016 to plan and coordinate the education in pharmacy in order to develop the teaching. The planning follows the internal process taking into consideration the feedback received from employers, partners, and staff. As students are part of various internal groups (the Faculty Council, Education Planning Committee and the School's Quality Team), their contribution to the planning process is assured. As teachers are also active researchers, the teaching-research nexus is ensured thus fostering the goal of providing research-based education. As the Bachelor's Programme has a clearly defined working life relevance in Finnish pharmacies, both student application rates and the employment rates of graduates are high. According to the audit material and interviews, the teaching staff are well connected to external stakeholders and use their feedback in the planning and development of the programme. Experts from the field are active as teachers thus not only assuring the necessary link to the professional field but also the relevance of the learning outcomes for the pharmaceutical field. This was made evident during the audit as it was confirmed that pharmacists who host interns are both teachers and future employers and so have a strong voice in curriculum development.

During the audit visit, the students in the degree programmes mentioned that they have good contact with the teaching staff, and are involved in the development of the programmes. They further reported that they could participate in teaching development days arranged by the school. They are also able to give feedback directly or through student representatives who participate in the Education Planning Committee.

The response rates of the electronic PalauteOodi student feedback are low because the process of gathering feedback is voluntary and not very well linked to other activities in the course. Therefore, the audit team recommends taking steps to develop better feedback gathering mechanisms. During the audit visit, the interviewees recognised some possible solutions such as collecting the feedback at the end of the course rather than collecting it separately after the course. Informing students systematically about the use of the feedback might also encourage them to give more and better feedback.

As mentioned previously, the feedback system is being renewed on the university level and counter feedback mechanisms are being implemented. Teacher training and life-long-learning are done in cooperation with the Student and Learning Services as well as the Centre for Training and Development, Aducate.

Quality management related to the implementation of educational provision

The degree structures are described in the Study Guide available on the university's website. Each course is described in the electronic WebOodi system, and instructions and forms needed by students are available on the websites of the faculties and other units. The teachers in the degree

programmes attend pedagogical studies. They use various teaching and assessment methods depending on the intended learning outcomes and ranging from case-orientation simulations (for example, learning diaries and self-assessment exercises) to portfolio development and project work. The teaching staff's attendance of studies in university pedagogy is monitored on a yearly basis (number of completed credits). New teaching methods are incorporated – for example flipped classroom teaching and new electronical materials – and are evaluated and the results are disseminated within the university in order to create an institutional benefit. Most of the staff are involved both in teaching and in research, thus research-based teaching provides key momentum for the programme. Furthermore, as bachelor graduates will be qualified to work as licensed pharmacists, practical training periods are implemented in the programme as well.

The introduction to the Bachelor's Programme is well thought out with both student tutoring and a new teacher tutor system. Every student has a tutor that can help with difficulties in learning and practical issues. However, due to the size of the Bachelor's Degree Programme especially students with serious problems might nevertheless go unnoticed. The programme has a high graduation rate and the students seem to be satisfied with the education. The programme also has a study counsellor who monitors the advancement of studies and contacts students when necessary.

The Bachelor's Programme is well connected with the working life environment in Finnish pharmacies. The internships in pharmacies also serve to reassure the students that the quality of their education is high and that it is well connected to the needs of their future working life. Working-life relevance is supported by the possibility of a training period in a pharmaceutical company or with health and medical authorities, such as Fimea or the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, KELA. Students practice patient counselling in authentic work situations which are assessed by practicing pharmacists as their mentors. In addition to the internship periods, external teaching staff from organisations relevant to the degree programmes are employed as visiting teachers.

There are many different channels used for relaying information, but as students stated in the interviews, these are not always used according to their intention. Thus, important news might be missed because students use these channels only when they are trying to find something specific, not when the university is trying to reach them. The planned Yammer System could be used to eliminate this issue.

As already mentioned, course feedback is collected and counter feedback is given, but as of 2016/17, also study path feedback from first year students and from the Master's Programme students will be gathered. All feedback collected provides information to be used both in planning and in implementing pharmacy education. This process is due to a development target of the previous audit which has been put into use, but according to statements both in the self-evaluation report and from the interviewees, needs refinement particularly with regards to students' response rates. As the programmes are closely connected to the professional field, their outcomes receive direct feedback through the employment rate of the graduates, which triggers periodic evaluation and monitoring of the programmes.

The quality work is comprehensive. The implemented procedures produce an evident impact on the quality, which is evidenced by the graduate outcome and the repeatedly confirmed integration of the graduates into working life. The audit team found evidence of the effectiveness of the quality work conducted in the Degree Programmes in Pharmacy. The impact of the quality work is evaluated in annual reviews with the help of feedback received from internal audits and other external assessments. The programmes regularly follow the indicators set by the university (e.g. the percentage of students completing 55 credits per academic year and employment rates 1 year after graduation) and use these to develop the curriculum.

Participation in quality work

Participation in quality work occurs through the various committees and working groups in which both internal and external stakeholders are represented. The staff and student participate in many working groups and quality teams to carry out their quality work. The School has its own quality team. There are also separate courses available on quality issues, such as the online course “Introduction to Quality Assurance” for all students.

The teaching staff interviewed showed high levels of commitment to quality and quality work, but also stated that they feel a discrepancy between the strategic level of the university and their everyday work, which is, as already mentioned in chapter 3, an issue for a more stringent and focused communication between the different organisational levels and units of the institution.

6.2.2 Doctoral Programme in Forests and Bioresources (FORES)

The Doctoral Programme in Forests and Bioresources (FORES) has a high research impact and is internationally renowned; the programme's objectives are closely connected with the university's strategy. The quality management related to planning and implementation of the programme works well and is fit for purpose. The programme is strongly working life oriented and external stakeholders have good opportunities to participate in the development of the education. The teachers are aware of the quality system and take a student centred approach in their teaching and provide a good learning environment with links to the doctoral school. The students feel well supported and are part of the research community, however, their participation in the development of education should be strengthened. There is evidence of the effectiveness of the quality work.

*The quality management of the Doctoral Programme in Forests and Bioresources is at a **developing** stage.*

The Doctoral Programme in Forests and Bioresources is offered by the Faculty of Science and Forestry and belongs to the Doctoral School at the University of Eastern Finland. It is a multidisciplinary programme covering all fields of forest sciences, including the sustainable use of forests. It is the only doctoral programme in Finland focusing on forests and renewable resources and biomaterials. Students can study full time or part time while working and use recognition and accreditation of prior learning to contribute to their studies.

The degree awarded after the completion of the programme is a Doctor of Science (Agriculture and Forestry) or Doctor of Philosophy with Forest Sciences as the major subject. There are currently about 80 students on the programme. The intake varies but is about 10 students a year, half of whom are international students.

The programme consists of a doctoral dissertation, as well as a minimum 30 credits of doctoral studies. The required studies are divided into transferable skills studies (5 credits) and discipline-specific studies (25 credits). The discipline-specific studies also include a research seminar. In addition to the doctoral studies, students may be expected to complete supplementary studies. A maximum of 60 credits of supplementary studies may be required, depending on the student's master's degree and other substance- and methodology-related skills for pursuing doctoral studies. The objective of the supplementary studies is to provide the student with sufficient skills to write a doctoral dissertation in the field of forest sciences.

Quality management related to the planning of educational provision

The Faculty Council plays a key role in the overall development of the programme. It confirms the curriculum which is presented by the programme's steering committee on an annual basis. The programme follows a student centred approach identifying the areas that the student is researching and designing a study plan for their learning. There are clear links with research, development and innovation activities as well as interaction with stakeholders and employers, who give feedback on the programme thus contributing to the planning process of the programme.

In the programme, each student's personal learning outcomes are defined in more detail in a research plan and a related personal study plan, which students prepare together with their supervisors. The audit team found this a good practice. The personal study plan considerably enhances the preconditions for completing a doctoral degree as it directly supports work on the doctoral dissertation. The student can update the personal study plan during the progress of their studies.

Most of the students have a working space on campus, whether they receive funding from the university or from external sources and are therefore closely involved in the provision of the programme. The research work of the doctoral students is accomplished in research groups within the departments or outside the university in companies. The students clearly feel well supported and there is interaction between different students and supervisors at regular seminars. However, the participation of doctoral students in the development of education should be increased. Based on the interviews, working in research groups with several other doctoral students and supervisors supports effective, high-standard doctoral training.

The audit team also recognised the strong working-life relevance of the doctoral programme. The transferable skills studies have a significant role from the perspective of working life relevance. In addition, several doctoral dissertations are also completed in cooperation with industry. These topics are discussed in the alumni network and at annual meetings with alumni and doctoral students.

Planning and development of the programme is enhanced through discussions between the external stakeholders, supervisors, students and programme leaders thus having a clear impact on the quality of the programme.

Quality management related to the implementation of educational provision

The Head of the Doctoral Programme is responsible for the implementation as well as the evaluation and development of the programme. According to self-evaluation report the programme is the only doctoral programme in Finland focused on forests and the renewable resources and biomaterials and therefore, there is much competition from applicants to study in this unique programme. As from the August 2016, applications to the programme may be submitted on an on-going basis. To enter the programme, applicants must submit a study plan, a research plan, a supervision plan and a funding plan drafted in advance in cooperation with the intended supervisor. In addition to this, they must be able to name a supervisor or supervisors for their research project at the application stage. The application process and documentation are clearly defined. The students receive a good institutional and local induction, particularly the international students who, as was mentioned in the interviews, feel well supported. Over half the doctoral students are international students.

According to the interviews, the students contribute feedback on any taught courses and feedback collected on courses is also be visible to the person in charge of the course. The student's research plan and a related personal study plan for doctoral education, which doctoral students prepare with their supervisors, is helpful. There are also informal supervisory meetings, but no regular appraisal system throughout the programme of study with waypoints. The supervisors of doctoral

thesis and peer students play an important role in monitoring the learning and well-being of doctoral students through regular research meetings. According to the interviews, supervisors and instructors guide the doctoral students on how and where to present their work.

The interviews during the site visit showed that the students were not fully aware of the assessment system for their thesis. The main evaluation methods are the successful publication of peer reviewed papers. The students mentioned that the teachers respond well to their request for additional seminars and teaching if needed. Because there is no formal mentoring process for new supervisors, though most supervisors gained experience by working jointly with a second more experienced supervisor, the university should consider developing a mentoring system.

The audit team found that the supervisors are highly active and strongly committed to the quality of the outcome of the research as evidenced by the success of students in finishing their theses and finding employment. The School also provides students with multi-modal teaching strategies, as well as a good learning environment. The research is carried out in small groups and studies include teaching outdoors and some courses can be completed as online studies. Many doctoral students expressed the feeling that they were not isolated, even when working independently on their theses. The audit team considers this a notable strength. Quality work which is related to international peer review feedback is a key factor in the quality of the doctoral programme. Key indicators for the quality work of postgraduate education include the progress of doctoral studies (ECTS credits/year) and publications in scientifically high impact peer-reviewed journals. On a national and university level, the students' graduation time is monitored.

Participation in quality work

The School of Forest Sciences that implements the doctoral programme received the highest score in the University of Eastern Finland in the international research assessment exercise carried out in 2014.

As the interviews revealed, the teachers are fully aware of the quality system as well as their role in it and their contribution to it. However, the doctoral students were less aware and only felt they might give feedback on a formal course. External stakeholders are involved and contributing to quality work.

Further areas for development include the school taking a systematic approach to reviewing student progress throughout their doctoral studies, as well as exploring ways to support and mentor supervisors, both new and experienced.

The programme produces excellent academic results regarding the quality of output and the number of graduates, as well the employment rate after the graduation, and provides evidence of functioning quality management processes in the doctoral programme.

6.2.3 Master's Degree Programme Border Crossings: Global and Local Societies in Transition (BOC)

The Master's Programme, Border Crossings, is a new programme and the opportunities for gaining highly international research-oriented experience is its particular strength. The quality management procedures related to the planning and implementation of the programme are functional and provide good support to further develop the programme. External stakeholders contribute to the planning, implementation and improvement of the programme, yet apart from some current cooperation practice their contribution often comes via personal relations only.

Students participate in quality work and they feel well supported. The self-evaluation report and the interviews conducted during the site visit revealed the high commitment of the staff and their engagement in quality work. There is also evidence that the quality work enhances the development of the programme. As a recommendation for further development, a structured process for integrating stakeholder and alumni feedback should be considered.

*The quality management of the Master Programme Border Crossings is at a **developing** stage.*

The international Master's Degree program "Border Crossings: Global and Local Societies in Transition (BOC)" is a relatively new programme, drawing on the experience of two "predecessor programmes". It started operation in 2012/13 and has an intake of 20 students per year. It is a multidisciplinary programme, strongly related to one of university's top level research areas (Borders, Mobility and Cultural Encounters). It is conducted in co-operation with two departments of the Faculty of Social Sciences. Two academic heads co-ordinate the teaching activities. Lectures are provided by 24 teaching staff members at different career levels, including postdoctoral staff and PhD students.

The programme comprises 120 ECTS and the duration of studies is two years. The students come from Finland, EU countries and overseas. The programme represents a small, highly research-oriented programme, which prepares successful graduates for a wide variety of working-life positions.

Quality management related to the planning of educational provision

"We teach, what we research", is the programme leader's statement concerning planning and executing this programme, as it is strongly related to one of the UEF's top level research areas. The Master's Programme is organised in four modules, two of them being compulsory. The programme offers a great deal of flexibility as it comprises a wide choice of optional studies. This enables students to agree on a personal study plan suited to their future career plans. It was evident that the students interviewed appreciated how the programme met their needs. The organisation of the programme with options to major either in Human Geography or Sociology or Social and Public Policy with compulsory and elective modules enables students to select courses according to their personal interests or to the needs of their country of origin.

Job opportunities are also taken into account. According to the self-evaluation report, the planning of the curriculum is mainly the task of the two academic heads of the programme. The programme has clearly defined learning outcomes. As the new programme was based on two existing master's programmes, the students' experience and feedback was integrated into the planning of the new curriculum as well. The final decisions of the curriculum are taken by the Faculty Council and the Dean of the Faculty.

Stakeholders are included in the planning of the programme, particularly with regard to assuring employability and job opportunities. Based on the audit material and interviews with the staff, the programme recognises its labour-market stakeholders well and involves their opinion in the planning of the programme. Stakeholders and alumni of the programme are invited to meetings for discussing programme issues and providing feedback. A more systematic approach to the documentation of stakeholder's needs for the planning purposes is recommended. There is a good follow-up on alumni of the programme based mainly on personal contacts, yet formulating a structured process for alumni relations and building an alumni network is one of the future tasks defined by the programme. The programme maintains its working-life relevance through meetings with local and regional administration and industry. Furthermore, students volunteer for instance in refugee camps, thus applying their theoretical knowledge and at the same time having an impact on society. Besides this, there is a strong focus on academic careers and students are encouraged to continue their studies and apply to a PhD-programme.

Quality management related to the implementation of educational provision

Quality procedures as laid out in the Main Quality Manual are applied in the programme. This is valid for admission, study plans and supervision.

The two academic heads are also in charge of the implementation of the programme. One is responsible for sociology and social and public policy majors, the other is in charge of human geography and at the same time is the main co-ordinator of the programme. They are jointly responsible for the application and admission process. The application process of the programme follows the university's common process, based upon the criteria set by the academic heads. All applicants must go through this process and submit their credentials, as well as a written research project, which plays a major role in the admission process. The research proposals also serve as a basis for the planning of the individual learning paths of the students, as stated in the self-evaluation report. One of the areas to develop identified by the programme staff is to make the application procedure quicker and more efficient. The programme staff also wish to find better and more systematic ways to announce and promote the programme abroad. Many of the interviewed students stated that they found the programme by searching the Internet for master's programmes in their respective area taught in English. This was also underlined by staff in the interview.

Although research is focused mainly on Finnish-Russian border issues, teaching is organised with case studies which take the regional findings as an example. Students, particularly those from abroad, are encouraged to transfer the findings to their respective regions of origin. Thus, the contribution of students to the further development of the programme is strong, a fact that was also emphasised in the interviews (“We learn from our students”).

Case-based learning and problem-based learning are used extensively throughout the programme, which are relevant and suitable teaching methods for the small-scale, highly student tailored and research-oriented programme. Furthermore, many lectures are conducted by team-teaching, and the orientation and supervision of the master’s thesis is equally done in pairs, when possible. The audit team found this as a good practice.

Teaching on the programme is, as mentioned above, strongly based on research. According to the interviews the quality of research was high and the interviewed staff members and students also felt that their programme had a good reputation in general.

Both academic heads coordinate the teaching staff jointly and are the main contact persons for students. According to the self-evaluation report, the coordination of different disciplines with 24 lecturers involved is working well. Based on the interview with the students, students feel well supported. The ratio of students to teachers is favourable due to the small size of the programme, and thus the relationship between students and lecturers/coordinators is close. Interviews also showed that students are very content with the lecturers, their teaching and communication. It is seen as an advantage in the programme that the study groups are small and personal contacts between teachers and students are good. The assignment of personal supervisors contributes to a beneficial learning experience. As pointed out in the interview with the students, students feel that they are truly learning how to do research.

According to the self-evaluation report, many of the teachers have participated in courses or completed special training in university pedagogy. Although the self-evaluation report states that the modes of delivery are evaluated on a regular basis, informal means of evaluation and feedback seem to play a more important role than formal means: as already mentioned in other chapters, students are somewhat reluctant to use the PalauteOodi online-tool for feedback.

Students are encouraged to give feedback via e-mail. The small size of the programme ensures continuous communication, but might also lead to a lack of formal and anonymous feedback. The programme staff consequently identify more systematic methods for the collection of students’ feedback as a development target.

The strengths of the programme (the close contact between teaching staff and students, the open door policy, the accessibility of the academic heads) also imply that a structured process for feedback is neglected, as the co-ordinators already get feedback on a regular basis. The self-evaluation report shows that this problem is recognised and that the programme staff are searching for procedures which would combine the current strengths and the formalisation of feedback procedures.

At the end of the semester a collective feedback session is organised. Results are used to further improve the programme. The coordinators organize the feedback sessions and are responsible for the follow-up of the further development.

A student-centred approach is evident in the programme. The interviewed staff were highly committed to develop their teaching areas. They aim for a student centred approach in accordance with the university's strategy. According to the self-evaluation report and interviews, teachers apply their methodological and scientific expertise to the specific research topics defined by the students and their sphere of interest thus systematically broadening the scope of the programme.

The strong connection between research and teaching contributes to the well-being of staff and students. Good research is considered the basis for good teaching. Research of staff members and of students is seen as a strong criterion for quality. Assessment of students' progress is mostly carried out by more than one examiner.

The programme is international, but strongly linked to neighbouring programmes delivered in Finnish (the Master's Programme in Human Geography as well as the Master's Programmes in Sociology and Social and Public Policy). Thus, Finnish and international students are well integrated. It was pointed out by the programme staff that the integration of the international programme taught in English and the regular programme taught in Finnish will guarantee the continuation of the programme even after the introduction of fees for non-European students. However, the introduction of tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students (8,000 Euros per academic year) is considered be a challenge particularly for programmes like the Master's Programme Border Crossings with a considerable number of students from so-called third countries.

The coordinators are well aware that a decline in the participation of non-EU-students could affect the quality of the programme, as lecturers and students benefit from the non-EU-experience and perspectives. Thus, the self-evaluation report states that the impact of this trajectory should be monitored in the future by the university. The audit team recommends that this aim to develop monitoring would be linked to the development goal of a better promotion of the programme abroad.

Participation in quality work

The self-evaluation of strengths and development goals is nearly identical to the findings of the audit team, which shows that there is a high level of self-awareness in relation to quality targets and a productive critical approach.

The audit team found evidence of the effectiveness of the quality work verified in interviews with teachers and students. For instance, the curriculum development cycle ensures continuous development.

6.3 Research, development and innovation activities

The University of Eastern Finland is a research-intensive university and carries out high impact, international and multidisciplinary research which generates valuable knowledge used internationally and domestically. The quality system for research activities supports the strategic goals for University of Eastern Finland's research operations and promotes a culture where the impact of the research work is proactively guided in the desired direction. The information provided by the quality system consists mainly of external peer reviewed publications, impact factors and benchmarking and is used to develop the research activities further.

The university community and the main external stakeholders are engaged in the quality work. However, there are development needs concerning stakeholder engagement at the university level and for the further development of support for enterprise and innovation services.

*The quality management of research, development and innovation activities is at a **developing** stage.*

The information produced by the quality system

The University of Eastern Finland is a research-intensive university, which carries out high impact, international and multidisciplinary research that generates valuable knowledge, used internationally and domestically. Due to its multidisciplinary research the university seeks, in accordance with its strategy, solutions for global challenges in thematic research areas. Based on several international research evaluations, the university has identified five strong, top-level international, and five advanced-level research areas. The new university strategy attempts to take things forward and improve the rankings by strengthening and increasing the number of top-level international research areas. The main UEF strategic goal is to become internationally known as a multi-disciplinary research university. The current strategy (compared to 2010) has created links to complex challenges (i.e. global or societal challenges) which are systematically integrated into the whole quality system. The university's strategy for 2015–2020 focuses on a clearer profiling of research and education and a transfer from a traditional academic subject approach to more multidisciplinary thematic groupings of research and education.

A survey aimed at the university's most important stakeholders was completed in 2013. In the survey, the stakeholders were asked about their views and opinions on the local and global challenges the university's research could provide solutions to and where this could have an impact on societal development. The new strategy for the years 2015–2020 was formulated in cooperation between the scientific community of university and external scientists and stakeholders. Thus, the university with its diverse programmes and research areas is well positioned for multidisciplinary research.

The quality of the support services is being assessed and managed and a new administrative system will be implemented in 2017. The quality system for RDI activities is not yet comprehensive, and the recent development actions that are currently being implemented are taking the system from the building phase to a state of continuous development and enhancement.

The University of Eastern Finland and its researchers use feedback on the research activities from several evaluations carried out by publication reviewers and research funders, such as peer reviews. Most of these processes are external, and the process of internal reviews of grant writing and developing a publication are not quite clear. There are examples of good practice such as the grant writer activities of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Business Studies where the Research Coordinator assists in the application process for external funding, but these are not systematic throughout the organisation. The research leadership does not seem to receive regular information on the number of grant applications, the success rate and grant spend by research area or unit. The university schools are responsible for integrating research activities into their studies. Research activities have their own quality indicators and performance targets, and their quality management is also connected to the quality management of the degree programmes.

The Research Council steers research activities towards the institution's strategic priorities. It has members from the schools and R&D and Education Services and is chaired by the Academic Rector who also appoints the Committee on Research Ethics. The Academic Rector is responsible for the continuous development and quality of the research process as well as for ensuring research funding.

The Research Council coordinates, evaluates and supports the research-related strategy work of the units in accordance with the Board's policies. It assesses the level and impact of the university's research and monitors and reviews the university's scientific publishing activities. It also helps to develop the university's national and international research collaboration as well as coordinates and develops the university's doctoral studies and the activities of the doctoral programmes. The Research Council coordinates and develops the acquisition of external research funding, improves research preconditions and promotes the researchers' career progress and coordinates the development and activities of large research infrastructures. Below the Research Council, the faculties work with the research groups.

The university supports the activities of the research areas specified in the strategy with basic resources, its own strategic funds and the Academy of Finland's profiling funding. New professorships and Tenure Track researchers are recruited into research areas under PROFI funding in 2015–2019 and with basic resources in accordance with the university's strategic human resources plan. A number of research groups from the University of Eastern Finland are involved in both national and Nordic Centres of Excellence in Research.

University monitors the development, implementation and impact of its research activities through a 3-step evaluation. This includes firstly, self-evaluation of the research areas, then secondly internal evaluation at UEF by the Board, Leadership Group and the faculties, and finally external evaluation by the Steering Group for Research and the Research Assessment Exercise.

Quality management of key support services

There is effective quality management of laboratories at a health and safety level. There is also some support for innovation and enterprise activities, but it is limited and thus it is an area for development. The audit team recommends the university consider further development of the quality management to better accommodate the needs of commercialisation of research findings. In this way, researchers could better make successful independent businesses from their discoveries. The University Services comprises six units: Human Resources Services, Development Services, Student and Learning Services, Financial Services, IT Services, and the General Administration and Legal Service. The restructuring of administration planned for January 2017 needs to support the education, research and enterprise missions effectively. As identified in the self-evaluation report, the use of the EU Office in Brussels needs to be maximised. A further area for development relates to a systematic survey of how many external organisations are working with the university; the percentage of research projects that involve one or more business partners; the number of international businesses that have chosen the university as a key partner for their research and development and; the number of active patents and their annual income.

Taking a piece of ground breaking research or an innovative idea and turning it into a commercial product is not easy. Therefore, it is important to recognise how important it is to make sure that the work of researchers gets out into the real world and it would help to expand the number of services to support researchers hoping to take their work into the business world. Another area of development would be to expand the Research and Innovation Service team dedicated to supporting researchers personally and professionally. This could be done by setting up knowledge transfer partnerships between researchers and local businesses – which would be an excellent way of learning how the commercial world works and encouraging researchers to become consultants.

Participation in quality work

As described above, internal personnel groups are widely and successfully involved in the quality management procedures of research activities. Interviews confirmed that different personnel groups participate in the quality work related to research and innovation. In addition to this, the university seeks to ensure that regional partners understand the institution's strategic choices in developing its research capacity and competences via its web site and written documents. The stakeholders interviewed during the site visit were highly motivated to participate even further in the planning and quality management of research activities. The doctoral students interviewed did not have a clear idea of the quality system, but they felt well supported, although there is no formal exposure to commercial enterprise, innovation or entrepreneurship.

In general, the university is a highly motivated research-intensive institution whose active leadership and research staff are following an ambitious strategy of international multidisciplinary research to take the institution forward. The quality system of the research activities functions well, and the recent development actions that are currently being implemented are taking the system forward from the building phase to a state of continuous enhancement.

6.4 Societal impact and regional development work

The University of Eastern Finland is a strong player with significant regional impact, and networking is a strength which the university uses well to achieve its core functions. Although relationships between actors in the region play a significant role in the university's performance, stakeholder participation in the quality system is rather scattered. Internal and external stakeholders are involved in the use of the quality information system to varying degrees. The university's regional strength comes through its involvement in key areas of reform in society. External stakeholders' participation in the quality system is based partly on personal relationships, in which case quality procedures are not carried out systematically. The quality management system covers key support services efficiently, but it does not involve strong documentation of the quality system.

*The quality management of societal impact and regional development work is at an **emerging** stage.*

Managing the stakeholder process

The University of Eastern Finland has a large number of internal and external stakeholders including major financial stakeholders. Education also has a prominent role in the university's societal impact, which is realised in degree education but also in terms of regional responsibility to develop lifelong learning and the overall competence of the population. The university is a complex organisation with a mixture of subcultures including: academic teachers, researchers, domestic students, international students, administrators, and other staff. Shifts in the external environment caused by political changes will have an impact here with the introduction of fees for international students. The university effectively manages the expectations of various stakeholders by presenting them with the different faces of the organisation depending on their own interests.

A survey aimed at the university's most important stakeholders was completed in 2013. In the survey, the stakeholders were asked about their views and opinions on the local and global challenges the university's research could provide solutions to and have an impact on in terms of societal development. The new strategy for the years 2015–2020 was formulated in cooperation between the scientific community of UEF and external scientists and stakeholders. The university with its diverse programmes and research areas is well positioned for multidisciplinary research.

In the audit material, the preference for societal impact is addressed first in the context of future competence needs, aimed at the competence-based economy and regional effectiveness. To achieve these goals, the university builds stakeholder processes in a reliable and sustainable manner. This means that stakeholders' participate in reviews, audits and strategy work by setting and renewing objectives and making decisions about them. From the angle of societal impact as a FINEEC criteria, the key issue is not how actively the university engages with stakeholders, but how systematic the quality system is so it can identify stakeholders' views. The university has defined the key actors and tasks as a form of social interaction and has defined the actors responsible for them. This is a working concept that brings operators authorised to operate in co-operation with external

stakeholder, although the concept of social interaction was not clearly defined. When evaluating the quality management of societal interaction and regional development, the key issue is how systematically the quality system is in helping to identify stakeholders' views.

Strategic view on societal impact

It is essential for external stakeholders to distinguish between two separate university tasks. Societal impact is based on the long-term ability to interact with the society and to improve the conditions of its actors. The university reviews its societal impact through the four global challenges that are described in the university's strategy. If the university is successful in its societal impact mission, it will find solutions to the complex challenges and combine things in a novel way. For this reason, societal impact is realised above all in areas of education and research. This is described systematically in the Main Quality Manual. According to the Main Quality Manual, the purpose of the societal impact process is to promote and support society, business life and Finland's overall international competitiveness. Societal impact is also aimed at supporting the university's new uniform brand.

Societal interaction, in turn, relates to functioning in society and in particular in co-operation with external stakeholders. Without societal interaction, societal impact would not be realised. Based on the audit materials and interviews, it seems that societal impact is achieved more systematically, but societal interaction is implemented in quite different ways by the university's various units. Societal interaction at the University of Eastern Finland covers regional influence and interest group co-operation, international co-operation, educational co-operation, alumni co-operation, entrepreneurship and innovation, in addition to responsibility and sustainability. The model for societal interaction is systematic, but does not make clear the differences between the external and internal stakeholders. The consequence of this is that the system does not clearly bring out what the role of the university's internal stakeholders are with regard to the university's societal interaction tasks. Some of the university's units have co-operation with external stakeholders to work on core functions, such as influencing the curriculum process or setting the research.

The strategic goal set for 2020 is that the university will be an internationally recognised and societally impactful actor. Internationalisation is included in the university's strategy relating to societal impact, and the focus is on the internationalisation process of core functions and neighbouring areas. The university is actively increasing its networking to promote science, education, entrepreneurship and the innovation process. The activities emphasise responsibility and sustainability, and they are closely linked to the strategic goal of finding solutions to the complex challenges of the changing world. As regards internationalisation, the quality system has included student and staff practices in recent years, this has been pushed by the growth in the number of international staff, but also by the introduction of international practices in teaching and research. Information concerning the quality system is much more widely in use in English, and training and discussion about the use of the quality system is now held more frequently in English. On the other hand, shortcomings of the work induction programme in English were discussed during the audit interviews.

The quality objectives named in the Main Quality Manual are fairly conventional including the role of important and reliable actors, the goal to generate new enterprises and renew business life, being an active national and international partner, to be an open university and actor in continuing education and to be strong in regional student employment. Some of the objectives are important for some of the actors, such as employment, but based on the interviews they are not critical for many of the staff and other stakeholders. An innovative set of objectives and indicators would boost strategic goals – for example how attractive does the university make the region? Are there areas of specialisation that exist because of the University of Eastern Finland? For example, in Kuopio there is health technology; in Joensuu the university focuses on environmental expertise and Russian studies. The global challenges are quite similar to the regional challenges, not contradictory to them. The audit team recommends, that a more innovative set of indicators would be considered to boost regional and international impact.

The Open University, Children's University and Seniors' University are examples of activities in which the practice is being brought about systematically. Students are working in the region, which is one of the visible impacts and quality targets set in the Main Quality Manual. The importance of students as employees is monitored, but the results are not compiled with summaries for broad guidelines that could be used as a basis for development.

In recent years, several external factors have led to the need for the external stakeholders to be able to affect the university's internal processes and the content of the core functions. In the funding of research, for example, the Strategic Research Council under the Academy of Finland has emphasised stakeholders' role in formulating research themes. The external stakeholders also have a growing interest in the curriculum and teaching methods, and several good practices are presented in the self-evaluation report, such as identifying the stakeholders in several manuals and involving them in the strategy process. The alumni interaction is strong, but their intervention in core functions remain unclear.

The Main Quality Manual names the external actors in education co-operation as region's upper secondary schools, universities of applied sciences, Kuopio University Hospital, the City of Kuopio, Hospital District of Northern Savo, and employers located in the region. The descriptions of stakeholder interaction and their roles in the co-operation remain somewhat unclear, and the need for development of the stakeholders' role was mentioned in the interviews. The self-evaluation report recognises need for harmonisation and development the process of societal interaction.

The quality system documentation includes feedback systems from the stakeholders, project funders and customers. The societal impact and societal interaction information is relevant and systematic, but not used in an efficient way to support the PDCA cycle. For example, the project managers are in charge of collecting the feedback, something which occurs inconsistently. However, in the databases information are not collected and presented as systematic summaries, a practice that would enable a reliable and visible division of work time between these three tasks. Quality management for support services is based on a separate quality handbook, but the organisation of support services will be reformed from the beginning of 2017. There are new initiatives to help the researcher to get closer to the public, such as science cafés and student science days. The university's magazines are distributed to a large number of recipients.

International academic affairs, arriving and leaving exchange students

The aim of the University of Eastern Finland's strategy is to improve the international image, recognition and attractiveness of the university. In various policy papers of the university internationalisation is defined as a cornerstone of the overall strategy. Internationalisation should contribute to the university's visibility and reputation and to the goal of being among the top 200 universities in the most important rankings. Mobility of students is seen as an important vehicle for this goal.

The quality management procedures for international academic affairs are partly functional. The university has set a few process indicators, such as the annual number of exchange students leaving and arriving and customer feedback, yet there is still a need to improve systematic quality management procedures that support continuous development work.

*The quality management of international academic affairs is at an **emerging** stage.*

Functioning of the quality management procedures

The institution has set several goals for internationalisation and planned various measures and activities. The common goal set by the institution is to reach 900 exchange students per year (inbound and outbound). With currently 843 exchange students (303 outbound home-students and 540 incoming foreign students) the target is nearly met.

The definition of internationalisation and the targets vary depending on the organisational level and depending on the different actors. While at the institutional level – visibility, research co-operation and strategic partnerships are seen as a priority – services emphasise the mobility of students and staff. The lecturers in different programmes want to particularly attract foreign master's degree-seeking students. Internationalisation at home and the internationalisation of the curricula is an option mentioned by the international office and by some programmes but still needs to be developed.

It was decided to take mobility as a starting point for increasing internationalisation activities. However, the interviews with the staff and students showed that mobility, particularly student exchange, is not equally perceived as of strategic importance and therefore not fully embedded in the different staff groups. Based on the interviews, academic staff seem to put more emphasis on international research co-operation and the development of international master's degree programmes, taught in English, as a starting point for internationalisation and for quality in internationalisation. Therefore, although focusing on exchange mobility, a wider perspective is taken in some parts of this report.

While internationalisation is mentioned as a cornerstone in a number of policy papers at nearly all levels, it is not explicitly one of the strategic goals. Therefore, according to the audit material and interviews, no coordinated process is established which would define targets and responsibilities at each level. There are quality management procedures – steered particularly by the international office – for incoming international students and for outgoing Finnish exchange students. Those for international students seem to be more developed.

According to the equal opportunity policy of university, the admission process for foreign degree seeking students is well organised and standardised. Foreign students have the same chances to be accepted as Finnish students do. Welcome services for foreign staff members meet international standards. On a smaller scale this applies also to welcoming international students. Orientation weeks, welcome receptions by the city and buddy programmes are established. Yet, with respect to orientation the links between the international office and the programmes at a faculty level, as well as the distribution of duties, vary depending on the department and the programmes. At programme level supervision and feedback procedures are integrated into the procedures for home-students. In programmes that are exclusively international (some international Master courses) the same procedures that are in place for Finnish students are applied to international students as well.

Most of the programmes attend to a small number of students and therefore guarantee close and continuous contact between the lecturers and students. There is a lot of informal feedback, but it is not always clear, if and how the feedback is used in a systematic way in order to improve the programme and the quality of the procedures. With regard to mobility, this means that there is no evidence that feedback on obstacles to mobility for home students is collected in a systematic way and therefore no evidence that the findings are used to improve the curricula and thus the target of enhancing students' exchange. (i.e. integrating mobility windows into the curricula would be one possibility).

Evaluation questionnaires covering services as well as the academic experience are given out and coordinated by the international office. Yet, the return rate is not satisfactory. Those questionnaires which are returned, are forwarded by the international office to the respective programmes. On the other hand, programmes have additional feedback procedures (i.e. collective feedback sessions). Whether those results are also forwarded to the international office is not clear. Roles and responsibilities with respect to mobility between services and faculties/ programmes are not clearly defined. This is also valid on a larger scale. Procedures related to internationalisation and

particularly to the mobility of students and staff are mainly steered by the international office thus the procedures in place cannot fully support the achievement of the set target and improvements are thus limited to what the international office is able to influence.

There is certainly no lack of commitment. While every unit acts in the best way they can, there is however, a serious lack of coordination and of integration between management, services and faculties. It is due to this lack of coordination that quality procedures do not have much impact on the set target. But the interviews at different levels showed the need for better coordination was identified as a development goal. Therefore, the University of Eastern Finland has started to re-organise its international services.

While services for international staff are good, services for international students are satisfactory. However, as mentioned above, the procedures for outgoing home students seem to be less organised. There are information sessions for students at the beginning of each semester, where they are informed about the existing opportunities. But students mentioned a reluctance to go abroad as they feel that the university in Finland can provide everything they need and the benefit of international exposure is neither made clear nor sufficiently promoted by the responsible persons. However, those students who decide to go for studies abroad, receive the necessary information and support. They are also asked for feedback. The feedback questionnaire asks for relevant information, but the return rate is not high enough to produce the information needed in order to enhance mobility.

Furthermore, with regard to services, quality is judged by different indicators. The approach to quality management in student exchange and mobility should also try to integrate different criteria which are fit for purpose.

Participation in quality work

The staff are well aware of the relevance of internationalisation for further developing teaching and research and meeting the strategic goals of the university. However, their involvement in quality work linked to internationalisation depending on function and position, is not satisfactory overall. It is mainly left to the international office and partly to the programmes to design and organise the respective procedures. There is no clear common understanding as to what quality management in internationalisation means and how mobility could contribute to the quality of teaching and services. The question as to how the experience of international students and mobile Finnish students could contribute to enhance the quality with regard to teaching methods, learning outcomes, curricula, assessment or feedback is not yet systematically reflected in the university. This might be due to the reduced scope of perception and understanding of internationalisation as a whole, as well as to some extent to the language of the quality manuals, as some members of the academic staff stated or expressed the feeling that there were too many quality manuals. This indicates that quality culture with regard to internationalisation is definitely considered a development goal.

Many professors stated that their teaching is closely related to their research. Because their research relates to international publications in their respective area, and is often conducted through international co-operation, published in international journals, cited by international scholars, quality in internationalisation is approached by the academic staff members mainly via quality in research. This rationale and reasoning is comprehensible, but does not fully reflect the scope of internationalisation as different teaching methods might also contribute to the quality of education. While training on university pedagogics is provided, there is no evidence whether international and intercultural aspects are part of such trainings as well.

Students are involved in quality work, but their involvement is not systematic and not very strong. Students' unions provide information about opportunities for studies abroad and sometimes participate in feedback interviews. External stakeholders see the benefits of internationalisation for the university and for the local business, but they do not have an active role in quality work.

Although internationalisation is considered a "cornerstone" of the university's policy and although academic and non-academic staff are committed to internationalisation as understood by them, the overall results are not as good as they could be. The interviewed persons at different levels are aware that a more comprehensive approach to internationalisation might contribute to further improvement.

If mobility of students is taken as a starting point for such an improvement, degree seeking students should be included in contemplation on this matter as well. The expectations, of how foreign students and mobile Finnish students could contribute to the quality in teaching, should be defined more clearly (i.e. how the vast majority of non-mobile home students could benefit from foreign students). Also with regard to foreign master's degree students, the goals and expectations might be defined more precisely. The interviews with master's degree students from abroad showed that the master's programmes taught in English are seen as attractive, also because up till now no fees have been demanded. International students stated that they do not learn Finnish as there is no need to do so. They seem to stick mainly to the community of international students. Thus, more efforts could be made to integrate Finnish and foreign students, thus creating a benefit for both groups. Good approaches include the buddy programmes and a UEF summer school, coordinated by the students and Learning Services.

The benefits of mobility should not be limited to individual benefits only. The institutional benefits should equally be considered. The institution expects that internationalisation will contribute to international visibility and enhanced reputation and to the goal of being among the top 200 universities in the world. In this context, it might be wise to clarify, how the mobility of exchange and degree seeking students will play a role in reaching this goal. A starting point could be to combine existing research co-operations with student exchange programmes, not only at the master's and PhD-level, but also at undergraduate level.

Staff members at all levels are committed to internationalisation. A more comprehensive approach, which integrates research, teaching and services and defines quality procedures from there, might be a good way to direct this dedication and commitment to achieve beneficial results for the entire institution.

The quality system as a whole

The quality management procedures constitute a functioning system to support the continuous development of the quality work. The quality system covers the essential parts of the core duties of the university and provides support for the development of the operations. There is evidence that the system has an impact on the development of the core duties of the University of Eastern Finland. The quality culture has been enhanced since the earlier audit conducted in 2011, and the development of operations is based on an existing quality culture. There is evidence of a well-developed quality culture demonstrated by the clear commitment of all persons interviewed. The university community and external stakeholders are engaged with the university's strategy.

*The quality system as a whole is at a **developing** stage.*

8.1 Comprehensiveness and impact of the quality system

The quality system constitutes a functioning system, that is an integrated part of the overall management system and covers the core duties of the institution with a constant view to further improvement. Thus, the university's management is aware of the need to further harmonise and systematise the quality system and the strategic management.

As the institution's strategy focuses on global challenges, the university seeks to find and develop solutions through interdisciplinary research and teaching. It is evident, that the quality system is embedded in the management and steering of the university. In degree education, the quality system produces data to develop interdisciplinarity, student-centredness and research-orientation in teaching and learning. In research, the quality system emphasises high-impact international multidisciplinary research by collecting data mainly from external reviews such as peer-reviewed publications, impact factors and benchmarking. In the area of societal impact and regional development work, the university builds on networking to achieve its core functions.

Due to the merger of the two antecedent universities and despite the consistent and dedicated work towards a common institutional culture, various types of discipline-based cultures still exist. This can particularly be seen in the varying interpretations of some key concepts, such as student-centred university, or internationalisation, but also in the existence of a still high number of quality manuals. Nevertheless, the system is organic and innovative, and as evidence of this, manuals are updated whenever necessary and with a focus on avoiding repeated routines and to producing relevant information for the units. In some respects, the system appears to be overburdened and somehow too complex for internal and external stakeholders wanting to access the quality system more easily. From this point of view, the audit group sees harmonisation as a significant factor in achieving the university's strategic objectives, including, for example, its aim of being the leading learning environment in Finland. The functionality of the quality system is monitored in regular management review meetings, and based on the results of internal audits and staff performance appraisal meetings. The documentation is comprehensive, but could be made more easily available to all external stakeholders and consequently be used more efficiently. The need for this is evident, as the university has strategic collaboration agreements with national-level research institutes.

8.2 Quality culture

In the self-evaluation report for the audit, the university defined quality culture as the development of process quality and the commitment of all to quality work. This is intended to take place in an environment that fosters, encourages and inspires the development of people and activities. The quality culture is open and transparent and closely related to everyday operations. The rationale and objectives of the quality policy of the University are based on the outcomes of an inclusive strategy development process that ensures the linkage between strategy and quality work.

The audit group finds the quality system to be coherent and supportive of the quality culture. It covers all essential parts serving the strategic management and operations of the institution, and it creates the option for all university stakeholders to make quality work part of their daily operational work. Thus, the quality culture ensures everyone has an opportunity to participate and engage in the continuous development of the university and its core duties, including the quality and productivity of activities. As the responsibilities in societal interaction are partly linked to discipline cultures and individual perspectives, the quality culture partially faces challenges in terms of divergent interpretations stemming from the disciplinary cultures. Thus, to enhance a common and institutional understanding of the quality culture, the audit team identified in the interviews a need for improved and concise communication with internal and external stakeholders.

8.3 The quality system as a whole

The quality system produces information that feeds into established procedures. Processes are used and communicated systematically. The staff, students and external stakeholders have a possibility to access the official information given on the website, and the information for different actors is symmetric. The audit group found evidence that the quality system functions well at the university's various organisational levels, yet with variances mainly due to disciplines and unit-specific features. The leadership of the university is clearly committed to quality enhancement, and supports the further development of the quality system aiming to make processes function more systematically. The functionality and impact of the system can be seen in the development steps since the previous audit and in the commitment of all the people interviewed to quality work.

9

Conclusion

9.1 Strengths and good practices of the quality system

Strengths

- The open quality culture at the University of Eastern Finland is supported by a committed and systematically operating quality team.
- The Main Quality Manual as the backbone of the system is clear and comprehensive and accessible to the different users.
- Systematic internal audits and benchmarking provide information on the phases of quality work and bring more structure to quality-related activities.
- The university leadership and staff have a strong commitment to support innovative teaching methods and thus the creation of an excellent learning environment.
- The quality management procedures enhance clear and systematic research orientation in teaching.
- The systematic development work since the earlier audit and the evidence provided for this is a clear strength of the quality system.
- The engagement of various personnel groups in the execution of internal audits, including students, assures quality work a participatory process.

Good practices

- The university's Digi Steering Group is developing a new online work environment – which is expected to enhance information on quality issues irrespective of time and place.
- An optional course on quality assurance is offered to raise both interest and awareness of quality work among the students. Furthermore, training students as internal auditors helps to foster the institution's quality culture.
- Good practices are also shared and communicated through various channels such as the flipped classroom experience.

- Collective feedback sessions build trust and understanding of the needs of the different stakeholder groups.
- The Transferrable Skills module in the Doctoral programmes supports personal development of doctoral students.
- The new format of University of Eastern Finland's Summer School fosters interaction between Finnish and international students.
- The internal platform Oppitupa where teachers share good practices on teaching, is a further example of good practice.

9.2 Recommendations

- The audit team advises the University of Eastern Finland to engage more systematically with stakeholders in defining their role in university's quality work. The audit team recommends, that a set of qualitative indicators should be considered to boost regional and international impact.
- The leaders of the institution should promote a clear and overall institutional interpretation of strategic key concepts, such as student-centredness and internationalisation and communicate it to all stakeholders. The audit team encourages the university to provide more training opportunities for the personnel to support the common interpretation of key strategic concepts.
- The large number of additional local quality manuals should be reconsidered to make operational quality work as straight forward, consistent and understandable as possible.
- A comprehensive strategic approach to internationalisation should be developed, integrating international research co-operation and exchanges of undergraduate and graduate students as part of this approach.
- The information systems in research administration should be developed to easily allow strategic monitoring and management of research activities.
- The audit team advises the university to develop new ways to improve the response rates in course evaluations.
- The leadership team should ensure that quality management is embedded in the new administrative systems and structure.

9.3 The audit team's overall assessment

The quality system of the University of Eastern Finland fulfils the FINEEC criteria for the quality system as a whole and for the quality management as it relates to core duties. None of the audit targets are at the absent stage and the quality system as a whole (audit target 6) is at the developing stage.

The audit team proposes to the FINEEC Higher Education Evaluation Committee that the University of Eastern Finland passes the audit.

9.4 Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision

In its meeting on 21 April 2017, the Higher Education Evaluation Committee decided, based on the proposal and report of the audit team, that the quality system of the University of Eastern Finland meets the FINEEC criteria for quality systems as a whole and quality management of the higher education institution's core duties. University of Eastern Finland has been awarded a quality label that is valid for six years beginning on 21 April 2017.

APPENDIX 1: Table of the audit targets and criteria

TARGETS	CRITERIA			
	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
1. Quality policy	<p>The quality policy shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• rationale and definition of the quality system's objectives and responsibilities• accessibility of the quality policy to internal and external stakeholders• linking to the institution's overall strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality policy's rationale, objectives and division of responsibilities are at an early stage of development and are only partially defined.• The quality policy is not fully accessible and does not sufficiently take into account the information needs of internal and external stakeholders.• The quality policy is insufficiently linked to the institution's overall strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality policy's rationale, objectives and division of responsibilities are clearly defined and the result of an inclusive process.• The quality policy is accessible to all internal and external stakeholders, taking their information needs into account.• The quality policy is clearly linked to the institution's overall strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality policy's rationale, objectives and division of responsibilities are defined in explicit terms and the result of a thorough and wide process.• The quality policy is accessible and actively communicated to all internal and external stakeholders.• The quality policy is an integral part of the institution's overall strategy.

TARGETS

CRITERIA

TARGETS	CRITERIA		
	Absent	Emerging	Advanced
2. Quality system's link with strategic management	<p>The quality system and quality work show an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ability to meet the information needs of strategic and operations management • procedures for the use and communication of quality information • functionality at different organisational levels • division of responsibility • commitment in the execution of roles and responsibilities in the institution's quality work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality system and the information it produces serve only partially the needs of strategic and operations management. • Procedures for the use of and communication of quality information are weak or uneven. • The quality system functions unevenly across the institution. • The division of responsibility is only partially effective, with variable commitment in the execution of roles and responsibilities in the institution's quality work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality system and the information it produces serve strategic and operations management. • Established procedures ensure that the information produced is put to use and communicated systematically within the institution and to external stakeholders. • The system works evenly across different organisational levels and units. • The division of responsibility is effective, and roles and responsibilities in the institution's quality work are executed with commitment. • The institution has well-established and excellent procedures that systematically produce information for strategic needs, and the information is put to systematic and wide use. • The institution has well-established and excellent procedures for communicating information to different personnel groups, students and external stakeholders. Communication of the information is active and up-to-date. • The quality system works effectively across all organisational levels, in a way that adds value to and enhances the quality of the institution's operations. • Managers and members of the community are committed to enhancement and the embedding of a quality culture.

TARGETS

CRITERIA

	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
3. Development of the quality system	<p>The HEI shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> procedures for evaluating or developing the quality system or overall view of the functioning of the quality system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The institution has in place procedures for evaluating and developing the quality system but these procedures may not always be fit for purpose and/or effectively used for the system's further development. Institutional oversight of the functioning of the quality system needs to be strengthened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HEI has in place well-functioning procedures to evaluate and develop the quality system. The institution is able to identify the system's strengths and areas in need of development, and development work is systematic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HEI has well-established and systematic procedures for regularly evaluating and developing the system. The institution is able to efficiently identify the system's strengths and areas in need of development. There is clear evidence of the system's successful development work.
<i>Follow-up section for the HEIs subject to the second audit:</i>	<p>The HEI shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development work following the first audit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the quality system after the first audit has not been systematic or effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the quality system after the first audit has been systematic. The system works better than before. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the first audit, the HEI has systematically improved the functionality and fitness for purpose of the quality system. Special attention has been given to the workload produced by the system. The system has been developed in a successful and effective manner.

The fulfilment of the following criteria is reviewed separately for each core duty and optional audit target:

TARGETS

CRITERIA

	CRITERIA			
	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
<p>4. Quality management of the core duties, including essential services supporting these</p> <p>4a) Degree education</p> <p>4b) Research, development and innovation activities, as well as artistic activities</p> <p>4c) Societal impact and regional development work (incl. social responsibility, continuing education, open university and open university of applied sciences education, as well as paid-services education)</p> <p>4d) Optional audit target</p>	<p>The quality system shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality management procedures used to achieve the goals set for the core duties • participation of the institution's personnel groups, students or external stakeholders in quality work related to the core duties • quality management of essential services supporting the core duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures are in place but insufficiently developed. The procedures do not fully support the achievement of institutional strategic goals set for the core duties. • The information provided by the quality system is as yet insufficient for the development of the core duties. Information use is sporadic and/or information collection is an end in itself. • Personnel groups, students and external stakeholders are only partially involved in quality work. • The quality management of key support services is not functional. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional quality management procedures advance the development of the institution's core duties and the achievement of goals set for the operations. • The quality system produces relevant information for the development of the core duties, and the information is used for this purpose. • Personnel groups and students are involved in quality work. External stakeholders also participate. • The quality management of key support services functions relatively well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HEI has systematic and well-established quality management procedures that provide excellent support for the development of the institution's core duties and the implementation of its overall strategy. • The institution has systematic and excellent procedures used to produce information for the development of the core duties. There is clear evidence that information is used systematically and successfully. • Personnel groups and students are committed and actively involved in quality work. Special attention has been given to the workload generated by the quality management procedures. External stakeholders are also systematically involved in quality work. • The HEI has systematic and well-established procedures for the quality management of key support services. There is clear evidence that these procedures function well.

The fulfilment of the following criteria is reviewed separately for each degree programme:

TARGETS	CRITERIA			
	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
5. Samples of degree education: degree programmes Planning of the programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curricula and their preparation • Intended learning outcomes and their definition • Links between research, development and innovation activities, as well as artistic activities, and education • Lifelong learning • Relevance of degrees to working life. Implementation of the programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching methods and learning environments • Methods used to assess learning • Students' learning and well-being • Teachers' competence and occupational well-being. Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of different personnel groups, students and external stakeholders in quality work related to the degree programme. Effectiveness of quality work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitability of key evaluation methods and follow-up indicators and their impact on the achievement of goals. 	<p>The quality system shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality management procedures related to the planning of the programme • quality management procedures related to the implementation of the programme • participation of the institution's personnel groups, students or external stakeholders in the development of the programme or • effectiveness of the quality work related to the programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures related to the planning of educational provision are not fully functional and do not provide sufficient support to the planning of the programme. • The quality management procedures related to the implementation of educational provision are not fully functional and do not provide sufficient support to the implementation of the programme. • Personnel groups, students and external stakeholders only partially participate in quality work. • There is little evidence of the effectiveness of the quality work related to the programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures related to the planning of educational provision are fully functional and support the planning of the programme. • The quality management procedures related to the implementation of fully functional and support the implementation of the programme. • Personnel groups and students participate in quality work. External stakeholders also participate. • There is evidence that quality work has an enhancement effect on the programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures related to the planning of educational provision provide excellent support for the planning of the programme. They are systematic and well-established. • The quality management procedures related to the implementation of educational provision provide excellent support for the implementation of the programme. They are systematic and well-established. • Personnel groups and students participate actively and with commitment in quality work. External stakeholders are also systematically involved. • There is clear evidence of the enhancement effect of the quality work.

TARGETS

CRITERIA

TARGETS	CRITERIA		
	Absent	Emerging	Developing
6. The quality system as a whole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HEI has only individual and unrelated quality management procedures. • There is no evidence of the procedures' impact on the development of the operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures do not yet form a functioning and unified system. • The quality system encompasses some of the HEI's core duties but there is little evidence of the system's impact on the development of the core duties. • The institution's quality culture is only just emerging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures constitute a functioning system. • The quality system covers the essential parts of the core duties of the HEI and provides support for the development of the operations. There is evidence that the system has an impact on the development of the core duties. • The development of the operations is based on an existing quality culture.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures form a dynamic and coherent system. • The quality system covers all the core duties of the HEI and provides excellent support for the institution's overall strategy and the development of the operations. There is clear evidence that the system has an impact on the development of the core duties. • The institution has a well-established quality culture, characterised by wide participation, commitment and transparency.

APPENDIX 2. The stages and timetable of the audit process

Agreement negotiation between the HEI and FINEEC	24 February 2016
Appointment of the audit team	13 June 2016
Submission of the audit material and self-evaluation report	15 September 2016
Information and discussion event at the HEI	22 November 2016
Audit visit	13–15 December 2016
Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision on the result	21 April 2017
Concluding seminar	19 May 2017
Follow-up on the development work of the quality system	2020

APPENDIX 3: Programme of the audit visit

Tuesday 13th December 2016	
08.30–10.00	Interview with the UEF Leadership
10.10–10.50	Interview with Vice-deans and Permanent expert from leadership group
11.00–11.50	Thematic interview on Quality management
12.00–13.00	Lunch
13.00–13.50	Thematic interview on learning environments
14.00–14.30	Interview with students: Finnish students
14.00–14.30	Interview with students: international students
15.00–15.50	Interview with external stakeholders
16.00–16.50	Interview with Board
Wednesday 14th December 2016	
09.00–09.50	Thematic interview on quality management of international academic affairs
10.00–10.40	Interview with students of the Degree Programme in Education in Pharmacy
10.50–11.50	Interview with staff of the Degree Programme in Education in Pharmacy
12.00–13.00	Lunch
13.00–13.40	Interview with students of Doctoral Programme in Forests and Bioresources (FORES)
13.50–14.50	Interview with staff of Doctoral Programme in Forests and Bioresources (FORES)
15.00–15.40	Interview with students of the international Master's Programme in Border Crossings: Global and local societies in transition
15.50–16.50	Interview with staff of the international Master's Programme in Border Crossings: Global and local societies in transition
Thursday 15th December 2016	
10.00–10.50	Thematic interview on RDI
11.00–11.50	Thematic Interview on student-centred approaches
12.00–13.00	Lunch
13.00–14.30	Audit team meeting
14.30–15.30	Interview and preliminary feedback to the UEF Leadership

APPENDIX 4. The Finnish higher education system

The Finnish higher education system is comprised of universities and universities of applied sciences (UASs). All universities engage in both education and scientific research and have the right to award doctorates. The UASs are multi-field, professionally oriented higher education institutions. They engage in applied research and development (R&D) that supports education and regional development. The UAS system was established in the early 1990s. Higher education institutions (HEIs) operate under the governance and steering of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC). Furthermore, higher education institutions are independent in their internal governance.

Universities and UASs receive most of their funding from the MoEC, and the activities of HEIs are steered in practice by four-year performance agreements with the Ministry. The only exceptions are the National Defence University under the Ministry of Defence and the Police University College under the Ministry of the Interior, as well as Åland University of Applied Sciences under the local government of Åland (Landskapsregering).

Finland has adopted a national qualifications framework (NQF) in 2017. Provisions on the National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules are laid down in Act (93/2017) and Government Decree on the National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules. The framework covers the entire education system. In this framework, the qualifications, syllabi and other extensive competence modules of the Finnish national education system are classified into eight levels on the basis of the requirements. Statutory regulations on the level descriptors and the positioning of qualifications, syllabi and extensive competence modules on the various levels of the framework on the basis of required learning outcomes, are enacted by the Government Decree. With respect to the higher education, degrees awarded by Finnish higher education institutions are positioned in the framework followingly:

- Bachelor's degrees (universities of applied sciences) and Bachelor's degrees (universities) at level 6
- Master's degrees (universities of applied sciences) and Master's degrees (universities) at level 7
- Universities' and National Defence University scientific and artistic postgraduate degrees (licentiate and doctor degrees), the General Staff Officer's Degree, the Specialist Degree in Veterinary Medicine, and Specialist training in medicine and Specialist training in dentistry at level 8

The Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules is based on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The abbreviation FiNQF is also used to refer to the National Qualifications Framework.

In addition, the Government Decree on University Degrees (2004) and the Government Decree on Polytechnics (2014) define the objectives, extent and overall structure of degrees. HEIs select their own students in Finland. However, national regulations stipulate some general principles for student admission (e.g. the equal treatment of applicants).

The educational responsibilities of the universities are stipulated by government decree. Universities provide bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees. A pre-doctoral degree of licentiate may be taken before a doctoral degree.

Bachelor's degrees consist of at least 180 ECTS (3 years of full-time study). Studies leading to a bachelor's degree may include: basic and intermediate studies; language and communication studies; interdisciplinary programmes; other studies; and work practice for professional development. The degree includes a bachelor's thesis (6–10 ECTS).

A master's degree consists of at least 120 ECTS (2 years of full-time study). The studies leading to a master's degree may include: basic and intermediate studies and advanced studies; language and communication studies; interdisciplinary programmes; other studies; and internship-based expertise. A master's degree includes a master's thesis (20–40 ECTS). In the fields of medicine, veterinary medicine and dentistry the second-cycle degree is called a licentiate. In the fields of medicine and dentistry universities may arrange education leading to the second-cycle licentiate degree without including a first-cycle university degree in the education. In medicine a degree consists of 360 ECTS (six years of full-time study) and in dentistry the degree consists of 330 ECTS (5.5 years of full-time study).

Once a student has been admitted to a bachelor's programme, universities usually offer them direct access to a master's programme in the same field. However, this is dependent on the university's decision. Students can apply for doctoral studies after the completion of a relevant second-cycle degree. The doctoral degree consists of 4 years of full-time study after a second-cycle degree or 2 years following a pre-doctoral degree. A student who has been admitted to complete a doctoral degree must complete a given amount of studies, show independent and critical thinking in the field of research and write a doctoral dissertation and defend it in public.

Universities decide on the detailed contents and structure of the degrees they award. They also decide on their curricula and forms of instruction. In addition to this, some fields (e.g. teacher education and the education of physicians, dentists and veterinarians) have detailed regulations that apply to some extent to the structure and/or content of the degrees awarded.

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) is an independent, national evaluation agency responsible for the external evaluations of education from early childhood education to higher education in Finland. It implements system and thematic evaluations, learning outcome evaluations and field-specific evaluations. Moreover, FINEEC supports providers of education and training and higher education institutions in matters related to evaluation and quality assurance, as well as advances the evaluation of education.

Audits of the quality systems of higher education institutions have been implemented in Finland in accordance with the principle of enhancement-led evaluation since 2005. The objective of the audits has been to support Finnish institutions in developing quality systems that correspond to the European principles of quality assurance and to demonstrate that functional and consistent quality assurance procedures are in place in Finland both in institutions and at the national level. In the audits, institutions are supported in their efforts to reach their strategic objectives and in directing future development activities in order to create a framework for the institutions' continuous development.

This report presents the audit process of University of Eastern Finland and the results of the audit.

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